

STARBURST™

007 thwarts world domination (again)

By Clark Parker

In an interview with *Starburst*, on the set of his latest James Bond film, *A View to a Kill*, Roger Moore



discusses his thirty plus years as an actor – a decade of which has been spent in the role of the world famous super-spy.

Lifeforce liftoff

Lifeforce director TOBE HOOPER talks about his latest film, and COLIN WILSON, whose novel *Space Vampires* was adapted for the film's screenplay, is also interviewed.

Back to school

Scientific mayhem rules *Supreme* in Touchstone Films' new movie, *My Science Project*. *Starburst* interviews the writer/director Jonathan Beutel and dinosaur designer Doug Beswick.



The Aliens are back!

By Peter Kent

The deadly Visitors from outer space have returned to Earth, and expected panic has ensued. Capable of assuming human guises, they have infiltrated positions of power, and their redcoat police have taken to controlling dissident elements of the population with ruthless efficiency.

Confusion has turned to suspicion as the alien invaders have also seized control of the press, and only a handful of smaller media operatives are left to challenge the daily lies proffered by the major news services.

Speaking from their secret rebel camp, freelance cameraman turned freedom-fighter, Mike Donovan, stresses the gravity of the situation.

"The aliens are only interested in the total subjugation of Mankind. Before they're through, our society will be subverted, its standards being changed from something good to something evil, through coercion, propaganda, enticement and fear. Putting it simply, we **MUST** stop them."

Comment, page 42;

The inside story, page 38.





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Left, Top: View to a Kill stars, Tanya Roberts and Roger Moore. Below: My Science Project. Above: Amanda Wyss in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and below: V macho men Marc Singer and Michael Ironside.

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FEEDBACK

WONDERFUL WHO

Congratulations on *Starburst 82*! I must say that your articles on *Return to Oz* looked absolutely magical!

Having collected your magazine since issue 20, I have found myself almost obsessively looking forward to each new issue, and must say that its style and format surely cannot, as they stand, be improved much more. All your articles are well thought out and very entertaining. Prime examples of this are:-

1) The letters page. It is a wonderful way to kick things off. I find the views of fellow readers extremely stimulating to read, and this section really gears me up to read the rest of the magazine.

2) It's *Only A Movie* in my opinion, is probably the high point of your magazine. John Brosnan's often irreverent comments about the failings of new releases are not only very funny, but perfectly correct most of the time. By the way, what does Mr Brosnan think of home-grown fantasy offerings like *Doctor Who* and *Tripods*, as I'd be very interested to know his opinions on this type of fantasy/SF or whether he prefers the hi-tech, whiz bang special effects films and series like *Battlestar Galactica* and *Buck Rogers* that come from America.

One article I dread reading each month, however, is Richard Holliss' TV Zone. Having just finished reading the *Starburst 82* feature on the latest season of *Doctor Who*, I am amazed and disappointed that Mr Holliss could be so narrow-minded in his views on a programme which after 22 years, is still light years ahead of any other fantasy series of its type in terms of plot, content and originality. Mr Holliss steadfastly refuses to like the stories, he proceeds to make a series of scathing comments about how unconvincing a monster costume looks or how



Above: Doctor Davison takes a pot shot at Davros in *Resurrection of the Daleks*. Below: Karen Allen does a spot of *Starman* gazing with Jeff Bridges.

cheap part of a set might look, without even mentioning plots or performances from a fine set of actors (perhaps he prefers twaddle like *Automan* where our Intrepid 'beef-cake' hero always seems to end up doing some silly dance routine in some disco or other, and making a right prune of himself).

Of course, I'll be the first to admit that the series is no longer what it was. The stories now don't seem to have as much impact as those of old, although having said that, the last two seasons have produced some real gems, for instance *The Awakening*; if only for the superb Malus; the wonderful *Frontios*; the action-packed *Resurrection of the Daleks*, an entertaining, fast-paced story with brilliant direction by Matthew Robinson, the suspenseful *Planet of Fire*, and the story many people believe to be the 'all-time classic' *Who*, *The Caves of Androzani*.

The only bad point of this story was, of course, the silly looking Magma Creature - a head and shoulders view of the monster would have benefited the story far better than full

views of a very rubbery-looking suit, which looked not in the least bit terrifying. Of course, Mr Holliss made a proper meal out of the failings of that suit and the 'portaloo' army headquarters.

How can anyone write a review such as the one in *Starburst 82* and then praise *The Tripods* as being "intriguing" and "rich in characterisation". The characters in the series, especially the major ones, were about as three-dimensional as a piece of paper, with a series that would have fitted quite adequately into five or six 30 minute episodes, dragged out to more than twice that length.

Stephen Kay,
Swindon,
Wilts.

STARBURST'S SNIPER

As a long term reader of *Starburst*, I have grown used to the sniping of John Brosnan at any and every SF movie that comes along. However, usually I do accept his attacks as at least

bearing the merit of being based on thoughtful analysis of the film in question.

His latest hysterical attack on *Starman* does not even show this quality, however. His two main criticisms are that *Voyager 2* could not have reached an alien planet in a few years, and that the three day limit on Bridges was unex-



plained. But the alien spacecraft at the end of the film was clearly identical to the shape shown at the start of it. Therefore the filmmakers did have *Voyager* meeting a spacecraft as Mr Brosnan wants.

Furthermore, shortly after the arrival of *Bridges on Earth*, he sends a message back to his people saying that Earth is designated hostile territory. In the circumstances it is quite legitimate to expect that a time limit for escape would be set, after which *Starman* would die to prevent capture, and transfer of technology to primitives.

In short, Mr Brosnan would be well advised to watch his films before he tears them apart. Incidentally, has he ever liked a film in his life?

Tim Collins,
Theyden Garton,
Essex.

WHAT NEXT?

Danger Man? Well, yes, OK, but... What will be next? *The Saint?* *The Power Game?* *The Virginian?* *The Invaders?* (To borrow John Brosnan's term, *The Invaders* was fake SF. If it had junked its trite SF premise and focussed on, eg, conspiracy theory, it might have amounted to something, instead of being an inconsequential repetitious bore which just seemed to mock Thinnes's sincerity.) How about covering the indisputable SF/horror/fantasy/animation/SPFX shows before the, at best, fringe ones?

It's good to see a review of

Max Headroom (the drama). It deserves to be recognised as a piece of quality SF. Fast-paced and heady, with a muscular, inventive plot, *Max Headroom* never let its *Blade Runner* world strangle it.

Otherworld sounds like a remake of *Fantastic Journey*. The last thing I want to see is a remake of *Fantastic Journey*.

Finally, re *Stonehenge* and the hippies: have the police been watching *Quatermass?*

Nicholas Haysom,
Curridge,
Southampton.

STALWART STAR 'FAN'

I have just returned from one of the best films I have experienced in quite some time. What an experience it was to emerge from the cinema in a warm, positive mood, assured that there is hope and compassion out there, somewhere... What film am I referring to? John Carpenter's *Starman* of course, in my humble estimation, the best fantasy film of late and Mr Carpenter's best film to date. Now, I could devote this letter to endless praise for the film and everyone connected with it, instead, I will move on to the matter at hand which concerns recent criticism of *Starman* that has appeared in your excellent magazine.

I was delighted to read Alan Jones' intelligent and warm appraisal of the film (issue 81) but would like to comment on one or two of his points. As Mr Jones so rightly observes, *Starman* is not so much about the latest visual wonders from Uncle George's magic grotto, but rather, about the relationships between the characters, and, ultimately, humanity. The emotion of the film is almost certainly derived from this, its heart, and I think that this is the main reason why we don't see the mother's departure (ie, the special effects). I should say that I was emotionally involved in the climax of the film and didn't feel the need to witness the event. Anyway, I welcomed Mr Jones' honest and fair review, which is more than I can say for John Brosnan's.

In the past, Mr Brosnan has, as I see it, been honest in his reviews, and, more often than



The original Max Headroom, reporter Edison Carter (Matt Frewer) with Amanda Pays (above), and in a bit of trouble (below).

not, suicidal (remember *Empire Strikes Back?*). As to whether or not he is fair, well, I wasn't sure about that one... until *Starman*! Good grief, Brozzer, after giving such a fabulous metaphorical kick in the pants to Harlan Ellison after his (mostly) lunatic ravings on the subject of *Gremlins*, how could you, in the next two issues of *Starburst*, make the same howling gaff as Mr Ellison in your review of *Starman*, especially after you made it known that (and I quote), "I resent it when a critic presumes to lecture me as well as accuse me of having a severe lapse of morals because I happened to like a particular movie that he didn't." Now, I should say that, in all fairness, Mr Brosnan usually substantiates his criticisms, which he nor-

mally levels at the filmmakers. However, when we are told, for example, that *Starman* is "a stupid movie", he seems to imply that anyone who received the slightest enjoyment from the film is deficient in intellect.

Incidentally, *Starburst* readers may like to know (if they are not already aware) that Harlan Ellison will be on trial for his unforgivable crimes against the *Gremlins* at the forthcoming Albacon in Glasgow (at which he is a guest of honour). Incensed fans of *Gremlins*, and indeed, *Starman*, are requested to prepare their case against Mr Ellison, give him hell, and make my day.

Martin Semple,
Renfrewshire,
Scotland.



ony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

CANNES '85

Gene Kelly should have been at Cannes instead of committing *Sins* with Joan Collins in Paris. Fred Astaire was on the poster; Ginger, too. Kelly, though, would've been the only fella singing in the damnable rain. The rest of us, 35,000 festivaliers, including 5,500 press, cursed the weather (three sunny days in 13) and, alas, most of the entrants. Oh, the competition was fine, opening with Harrison Ford's *Witness*, closing with Boorman's *Emerald Forest* and, in between – Bogdanovich, Godard (terrible), Risi, Roeg (owh!), Parker, Babenco, Chabrol, Eastwood, Szabo, Schrader (*Mishima* is stunning), Monicelli, Koltcheff, Woody Allen's *Purple Rose of Cairo* (brilliant cine-satire), Makavejev and another Yugoslav, Kusturica (who won the top prize, the Palme d'Or), and a poor Aussie who 'felt like a criminal' when everyone stalked out of his debut entry, *Bliss*.

Choice in what's known as The Directors' Fortnight was similarly exciting, but the market, usually a wealth of news for this column, was a drag. Lotsa so-called and downright bad genre stuff. As this movie marketplace represents the next six months of world cinema (outside Hollywood's 47-film summertime blitz), things are not looking good for cinema. Okay for cassettes. What else would require... *Bloodsuckers From Outer Space*. I made my excuses and avoided it.

Impossible to see all the films – a thousand opened in Cannes – even to see all you want to see, due to the clashing lunches, parties and interviews. I caught 40 minutes only of Geoff Murphy's last-man-in-the-world number from New Zealand, *The Quiet Earth* (I still recommend it and can't wait to catch the rest, when he's not quite the last man after all – surprise, surprise!) and had to miss all of Charles Band's offerings, including the film of H.P. Lovecraft's *Re-Animator*. C'est la vie! Anyway, let's get on with the report.

CANNES HITS 38

News came from surprising sources at the 38th Cannes. Readers might wonder why, exactly, I had a long lunch with Clint Eastwood on his yacht when I could've been seeing Charley Band's *Future Cop* (ex-Trancers). Or, why lunch with Gary Bussey, from our entry, *Insignificance*, and saying that it matches its title, does not come easy from a founder member of the Nicholas Roeg Movie Adoration Society. Lunch with John and Charley Boorman discussing *Emerald Forest* is more understandable as Boorman's always into myth and mysticism. (So's Eastwood's *Western*, *Pale Rider*, aka 'High Shanes Drifter')

How could I turn down the world's No. 1 star? As cool, laid back, tee-shirted and jeansed as ever, Eastwood had the best news story in town. What you might call an

AMAZING STORY

He let it out of the bag real easy. Almost shyly. "I'm gonna do one of Steven Spielberg's Amazing Stories television series. Not appearing, directing. It's a story Steven wrote, *Vanessa in the Garden*. A love story. Terribly romantic. I'm not really interested in romantics, but he thinks my films are romantic." His eyebrows rose at this. "He wanted me to do this. It's fun. It's a lark. I'm looking forward to it. I've never directed for television before. I was set to do some *Rawhide* episodes (1958-65) but they reneged. I only did some trailers. I don't particularly like television these days. Hate that flat lighting they pump in which is becoming the movie norm now. But I have very nostalgic feelings for the Hitchcock shows, *One Step Beyond*, *Twilight Zone* and all those anthologies that we remember back in those times. I never acted in any of them, wish I had. For some reason, I couldn't be sold to those shows. Too young, perhaps. So, I have a chance to do one now."

Considering the secrecy blanket about the series at the NBC stand at the previous Cannes event, the MIP TV market, not to mention Amblin's renowned security, it was good to have some news of Spielberg's tele-comeback. What he calls "scary and weird" tales. Clint calls them ironic stories. He says Spielberg has written all the shows – 40 to be seen over two years, he thinks. Spielberg has directed two already, Martin Scorsese did one and maybe Alan Parker (finally honoured at Cannes, where he's shown all his films, with the Jury's Grand Prix for *Birdy*) is doing one. Clint's episode is budgeted at £1 million. "Just a six-day shoot. With my own crew, I could do it in three for \$300,000. I'm being facetious. His crew might be very good." Not that facetious, Clint directed *Pale Rider* in a mere five weeks.

Anyone shoot a gun in *Vanessa's garden*? "No." Crash a car? "Well, there is a carriage wreck. And one person is killed. But that's just setting the thing up." Are you walking on like you did in *Brezy* (1973)? "No. I should never have done that. At the preview, the whole audience knew exactly where I was. It took everybody a few minutes to get back into the film. That's why Hitchcock started doing his earlier and earlier – getting it out of the way." And is Spielberg hosting the series? "No, he's not gonna walk into his own profile."

38th FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DU FILM



CANNES 85 - MAI 20

KING DIRECTS!

Gary Bussey had a good story, too. A fun interview, he never mentions the years or directors of his films. Just his weight. The way he tells it, his filmography should read: *Straight Time* (220 lbs), *Big Wednesday* (175 lbs), *The Buddy Holly Story* (160 lbs), *The Bear* (185 lbs), *Insignificance* (230 lbs).

During an avoider pause, I hit him with a real tough question: *What're you doing when you get back home?* "I've got more pounds to take off." Yeah? "Then, I'm gonna see Stephen King about a movie with him." Pause. "His first directing job." Aha! The film is *Maximum Overdrive*, from his *Night Shift* short story, *Trucks*, about lorries running amok, killing people. "Oh, he's

really a funny guy, that Stephen King," laughed Gary. "I just did his Silver Bullet, a werewolf movie, from his *Cycle of the Werewolf*. Wild book! Frightening! This new one will be too. No question."

Bullet was directed by Dan Attias, Spielberg's *ET* assistant. Now King's debut. Busey must love first-timers. "It's exciting. Very exciting. There's something about being on the edge of desperation and urgency that causes things to happen that you don't know will – which makes all your desperation and urgency kinda insignificant! See, I learned a lot working with Mr Roeg."

007 – THE END?

As always, the new Bond film's ad. art was all over the Carlton Hotel entrance. Yet James Bond is never in Cannes. Doesn't need the exposure. Or does he? First US reviews of *A View To A Kill* are worst on record. John Glen, directing his third in a row, and Roger Moore, in his seventh seem tired out – and Bond, played out. Cubby Broccoli remains unperturbed at 76. "We can keep making them for some time. Depends on how long I live." He hasn't got his computer writing the next one yet as he's musing on his first 007-less movies since *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* blew up in 1969. An 'historical study' and a modern actioner. To test new Bond actors? There'd been some talk about Bryan Ferry, but the betting's still on Pierce Brosnan.

REMO: THE BEGINNING

And Guy Hamilton, last director to shoot three successive Bonds, feels he's found the hero for the Eighties. American agent Remo Williams – so secret that he doesn't exist and works for an agency that doesn't exist, officially, either. Fred Ward, of *The Right Stuff*, is the off-beat choice for Remo, trained in the world's oldest assassination art. Sinaju, by an old mystic who can dodge bullets! More about Remo in another issue. Enough for now to warn Cubby that his stunts are handled by Glenn Randall, the lady Jones and *Never Say Never* again ace, and his film has a sub-title: *The First Adventure*. Producer Larry Spiegel has 58 books to work on by Warren Murphy and Richard Sapir, while Cubby's used up all of Fleming.

COCOON-ED

Splash director, Ron Howard, was back in the sea on a whole bunch of TV monitors telling us about his SF film, *Cocoon* – during a massive Fox lunch, presided over by his producers, Dick Zanuck and David Brown. They have a great track record; *Butch Cassidy*, *The Sting*, *Jaws*, *The Verdict*. They also began the Planet of the Apes series when Zanuck was married to Apes star Linda Harrison. Now his wife is Lili Fini and she found the David Saperstein book and set *Cocoon* rolling with scripter Tom Benedek and director Howard. "Visitors from the planet Antares," says Mrs Z., "come to Earth to retrieve a wondrous secret hidden on the ocean floor thousands of years ago and an unlikely group of human allies learn the secret of this cocoon." "Very uplifting, positive picture," adds Mr Z., "with heart and emotion as well as action and special effects." And Howard? "It's unique in that it blends humour and human relationships with science fiction action and adventure."



Tahnee Welch and Steve Guttenberg take an invigorating dip in the re-vitalising waters of *Cocoon*.



Daryl Hannah as Ayla, living 35,000 years ago as part of *The Clan of the Cave Bear*.

THANKS, GEORGE!

To my surprise, George Lucas bought me dinner one night. He wasn't in Cannes. Not even to see his and Coppola's *Mishima* production. But he picked up the tab for 300 of us eating out with the Latino team. Director Haskell Wexler is the camera ace who shot *American Graffiti* for peanuts to help George out in 1973. Returning the favour, Lord Lucas paid for the post-production and editing of *Latino*. Surprising as it's a (take your choice) left-wing/un-Reagan/honest look at how America is messing up Nicaragua just now – and George is not known as being political. "No, he's not," agreed Haskell. "I'm trying now to get him to make a stand about the militarisation of space." Who better? They call it *Star Wars*, after all...

... & YOU, TOO, UNCLE!

Telling me who was signing for my supper was not Haskell's sole surprise over dinner. For there, suddenly, in front of me was the best kept star-secret in Cannes. Splash siren Daryl Hannah. Her Latino connection? She's Haskell's niece. And girlfriend of Jackson Browne, who provided the movie's climactic, ironic song. So, sure, a quick chat... Yes she'd heard about *Splash*! It but hasn't been contacted about it yet. She's also a touch worried about being known for nudity. "Couldn't complain about *Splash*, but the *Reckless* scenes weren't in the script I accepted... and although they didn't wear much in prehistoric times, I did make sure my costumes in *The Clan of the Cave Bear* were more realistic than some little number in Beverly Hills suede."

SHOCK/HORROR NO. 1

...George Romero's *Day of the Dead* was not screened; obviously sold around the world already. But on the second day of sun, when toasting a little on the beach with my wife, I found our neighbours were... old mate and *Starburst* subscriber Richard Rubinstein and his wife. We chatted over a windbreaker fence. As always, Richard was full of *Laurel Entertainment* news, starting with *Day of the Dead* being ready for opening, all 101 minutes of it.

Is that it – the end of the living dead? "Let me answer that with a question: What filmmaker do you know who doesn't have something left over? So, a fourth is possible. Considering the way George works, the time taken between I, II and III, not for a few more years though." Next? *Tales From The Darkside* has been bought by ITV, and a second series is almost completed. No host – though Patrick Macnee introduces them on cassette. George and Richard are delighted, flattered that ▶

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

► Darkside has spawned the Spielberg and new *Twilight Zone* anthologies. They love using the TV show to promote members of the Laurel family and Richard is setting up features for people like Tom Savini and writer Michael McDowell to direct. He has enough in the Laurel hopper to choose from: *The Sisterhood*, *Mongrel*, *The Only Way*, *Incident At Valhalla*, *Imagine That*, *Emily*, *Mountain Man* and... right up Savini's street... *Phibes Resurrected!* It's by J. Whiton and William Goldstein, the mad doc's originators.

ROMERO + KING

George Romero directs again with Pet Sematary, Stephen King's greatest best-seller. "It's his Godfather," says Richard Rubinstein. "It's already sold 750,000 in hard-cover!" Shooting starts around October/November. "We had two ways to go," says Richard. "It would be a \$4 million film, with us fully in control and no censor-rating, or \$7 million and an American R-rating." Do I have to tell which route they're taking? Well, Richard added: "We're after actors, not stars. People like, say, John Lithgow."

Then, next year - at last! - Romero will tackle Steve King's epic, *The Stand*. So did Laurel ever buy Coppola's model of Las Vegas from *One From The Heart* when Zoetrope went under the hammer? (They need a deserted Vegas in the film - and that's impossible without a model). "We know where it is," laughs Richard. "Anyway, it was built by a Pittsburgh friend of George."

takes out humanity. He suggested *The Scarecrow* scripter Sam Pillsbury. Sam got John Hurt and David Warner interested. Bruno offered it to Nicholson, his agent demanded \$4m. and 15% of the profits. "I cast my mind around the world actors I knew and came up with one who could be Zak. Me! Until then in umpteen films I was the macho heavy. I knew they were thinking. Can Bruno play the scientist, the quietly spoken, humble introvert? I knew I could." So did his old jazz 'n' pop circus mate from six years of touring down under with a multi-media music-drama-political satire show - director Geoff Murphy.



Tony Curtis as The Senator in Nicolas Roeg's *Insignificance*.

ROEG MOVIE(S)

Less said about *Insignificance*, the better. Even Tony Curtis said, "Don't ask me what it's about because I don't know. It's wonderful and interesting but impossible to describe." And he's in it. Wildly miscast. Gary Busey is far better. So is his comment. "It ain't Dirty Harry is it?" If anyone could open up a stage play, I'd have put money on Nicolas Roeg. He tried; it worked well enough at the opening - if only showing us the guys operating the wind machine under Marilyn's Seven Year Itch dress! Yet it's still a play, with one good act only: Theresa Russell as Marilyn explaining the theory of relativity to Michael Emili's Einstein. Roeg-lovers, already cheated out of seeing his last film, *Eureka*, should know he's got two more to make. Lucy Irvine's book, *Castaway*, on New Zealand's Cook Island in September, and Jorge Ibarugaitia's *Dead Girls*.

SAM MAKES WAVES

A film I refused to miss in the market - and loved, though it's 20 minutes too long (isn't everything?), was the second outing from young Sam Raimi. Far removed from *Evil Dead* (he's into it now), it's one madly murderous farce with a bravura performance from Paul L. Smith as another kind of unstoppable 'Jaws'. You'll recall burly Paul as the *Midnight Express* warden and Popeye's Bluto. Italy has since turned him into a second-string Bud Spencer. He's better here as a rodent exterminator turning his particular gifts towards various humans including *Evil Dead*'s Bruce Campbell... for laughs.

Like Joseph's coat, Raimi's film has many colours. Well, titles. "More titles than Prince Charles," commented *Variety*. He wrote it with the *Blood Simple* brothers, Joel and Ethan Coen, as *Relentless*. That sure sums up Paul Smith. Columbia had that title registered, so Sam shot it as *The XYZ Murders*. (He mentioned both titles at Cannes in '83, and I thought he was on about his next two films). In December, he delivered the film to Embassy as *Crimewave*. Embassy did one of those market research polls that Boorman hates and found Americans would go for it better as *Broken Hearts and Noses*.

SHOCK/HORROR II

... was no *Lifeforce*! Tobe Hooper's film was due for a world premiere in Cannes. With nary an explanation, it was suddenly withdrawn from Cannon's screening schedule. Good/bad news? For us, the public, I mean. I'm not sure. Only reason for not showing the \$22.5 million movie about London besieged by an unearthly plague is that its US distributor didn't want the media near it until the US opening a month later. And if *Tri-Star* didn't want us to see it - why not? Pulling a movie that way simply breeds rumours.

DAMNOGRAPHICS!

If the US films in the market didn't bode well for cinema future, nor did John Boorman's horror stories about working for US combines today. His *Emerald Forest*, chosen to close the festival, was initiated with Britain's Goldcrest, which then pulled the plug on John just before shooting began in Brazil. Fortunately, he was rescued by Embassy Pictures. He tells the whole story, extremely vividly in his *Forest diary*, *Money Into Light* (Faber and Faber, £4.95 in September); it's light years better than the usual making-of quickie. He told me how much demographics (opinion polls) rule US filmmaking decisions. Plus TV trailers. "I've been told if I can't sum up a film in 30 seconds for TV - don't make it!"

THE QUIET BRUNO

As for New Zealand's *Quiet Earth*, I should add that the last man on earth is the great Bruno Lawrence. Who else? He's *The Star* of all the best Kiwi films: *Wild Man*, *Goodbye Pork Pie*, *Battletruck*, *Utu*, *Wild Horses*, *Heart of the Stag* and since Roger Donaldson's *Smash Palace*, he's been among Jack Nicholson's favourite actors. A veteran at 43, Bruno was born David Charles Gilbert Lawrence - in Britain. He helps write all his films. One maulin night, he actually set fire to *The Quiet Earth*'s handwritten scenario. It had to be rewritten from memory - "and we improved it." He never considered himself for the role of Zak T.Z. Hobson, the scientist who helps bring about the fourth dimension shift which

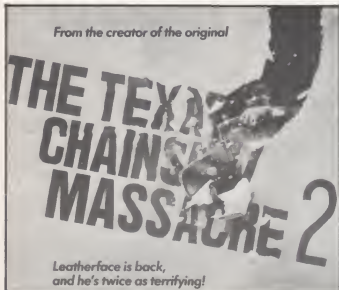


Director Geoff Murphy (left) and lead actor Bruno Lawrence on location for *The Quiet Earth*. Far right: Carie Dunlap in *Pumping Iron II*.

CANNON WHEELS & DEALS

Cannon chiefs Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus had enough other films on show. I like the Cannon couple. They make every kind of film from art to exploitation (like MGM in its heyday). They own cinemas in Britain, Italy and Holland. They recently tried to buy MGM! And they did buy the big Palme d'Or winner, Yugoslavia's *When Father Was Away On Business*. I like that movie, too; if you can't make a Cannes festival winner — buy one!

Cannon is currently employing directors like Robert Altman, Franco Zeffirelli, Konchalovsky and, according to one Cannes ad, J. Lee Thompson... paying Sly Stallone \$12 million for *Over The Top* (how true)... and has booked three more from Tobe Hooper. First, his *Invaders From Mars* re-make with Karen Black and her Paris, Texas star-son, Hunter Carson; *Spider-Man — The Movie* (which made things tough on the guy selling *Spider-Man — The TV Clips*), and... *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*. Love their cheek, too. Their promo reel of *King Solomon's Mines* — very Indy; very funny — had John Williams' *Raiders* music on it!



GERMANY CALLING

Embarrassing for the West Germans but Cannes opened on the 40th anniversary of the end of the last war. Some films dealt with it; one lasted six hours, correctly labelled *The Night*. Otherwise, business as usual. Wolfgang Petersen celebrated completing his SF biggie, *Enemy Mine*, with me in champagne. His *Neverending Story* co-producer, Dieter Geissler, said he's backing our SPFX ace Brian Johnson's directing debut. Telepathy, scripted by Steven Volk, another Brit. Geissler is also tending last year's Cannes find, the *Out Of Order* maker Carl Schenkel. His next one is *Cavern*, after gaining some US experience by helming three shows in the cable vision Hitch-Hiker series.

The guy they all envy is producer Manfred Durnick. He won an Oscar with *Mephisto* in 1982. With his same team, actor Klaus Maria Brandauer, Connery's last Bond nemesis, and Hungarian director Istvan Szabo, he had *Colonel Redi* in the competition. Brandauer was a hot Best Actor favourite, but all the film got was the Jury Prize. Hardly the reason Durnick is moving into animation with *Vampires of Düsseldorf*. He just adores the spook which has some blood-suckers in South America rushing to Düsseldorf on hearing their kinfolk have concocted a brew enabling them to leave their coffins... by day!

IF IT'S FRIDAY...

You'd feel it dated (like the films) by now, yet a vital sales pitch on new movies being sold like hot brollies in Cannes came from the makers of *Friday The 13th*... Cropped up on three projects, two of which also doubled up on the use of horror houses. Sean Cunningham, aka. Poppa Friday himself (he started the \$200 million series in 1980), was spreading the word about his production of *Friday*, directed by *Friday 13th* (that's 1981/82) man Steve Miner. "Sure, it's horror," nodded Sean. "But it's trying to mix scary and funny elements and basically has a light heart." His sales agent, Walter Manley, winced at that. No wonder, doesn't look that way on the ad. art. "Well, it's a film for those who like to be scared but not drenched in blood." By which time Manley was wondering if his money had been wisely spent on bringing Sean to Cannes. Too late. The movie is already rolling with Carrie's William Katt, delightful Kay Lenz and Charley Band's man, Mac Ahlberg, on camera for the Ethan Wiley script.

Friday V (1985) director Danny Steinman has meantime won the job of helming *Last House On The Left Part II* — the long-promised sequel to Wes Craven's 1972 reputation-maker. Why not Wes? He's had enough of sequels after *The Hills Have Eyes II*. So he says. He's tied up writing/directing *Flowers in the Attic* — and cannot not know that V.C. Andrews' mammoth best-seller has already spawned three sequel books: *Petals on the Wind*, *If There Be Thorns* and *Seeds of Yesterday*.

...IT MUST BE ZITO!

What's happened, then to *Friday IV* (1984) maker Joseph Zito? He's flown the horror coop and is busy creating what everyone agrees is the new Eastwood — Chuck Norris. Joe made *Missing In Action* (1984), really a sequel to the first film by Lance Hool but it opened first, and *Invasion USA*, another one-man army affair. Joe landed the biggie announced by Cannon in Cannes — *Deltaforce*, a 15,000 man-army this time, plus Chuck Norris VS Charles Bronson. But, as you'll have noted, it's Chuck's favourite director in charge not Bronson's Michael Winner. If Charley, now finishing *Death Wish III*, and also signed for Cannon's *Murphy's Law*, is on the way out, the one-time karate star Norris (real name: Carlos Ray) is obviously his successor. Norris' current smash, *Code of Silence*, is very stone-faced Eastwoodish, who admitted it had been offered him. Well, of course, it had. It's written by his *Pale Rider* and *Gauntlet* team.

Incidentally, Sean Cunningham is also trying to flee his horror rep. with the gospel singing tale of *Angela and The Brawlers* which is not Chuck VS Charley Part Two, more like *Mad Max Joins The Magnificent Seven*.

MS. CONAN. . ?

In 1977, when his name was one helluva mouthful and his frame a bit of a joke, Arnold Schwarzenegger was in Cannes promoting the film that made him (and Lou Ferrigno) a star, *Pumping Iron*. Same director George Butler was back this year with... you've guessed it... *Pumping Iron 2*. This time the body-building brigade comprises women. Playboy critic Bruce Williamson says their strong-arm stuff has a sneaky kind of sex-appeal. Bruce is bats! The ladies were in Cannes in borrowed swim-suits as George Butler looked on. "I'll always be proud that Arnold and Lou owe their success and stardom to my film," he said. "That kinda thing makes documentary production worthwhile." It does for Arnie with his hectic schedule of movies. Not so sure about Lou. He's back in Rome for the ubiquitous Cannon's *Sinbad*, with SPFX from Luigi Cozzi, alias his *Hercules* director "Lewis Coates".



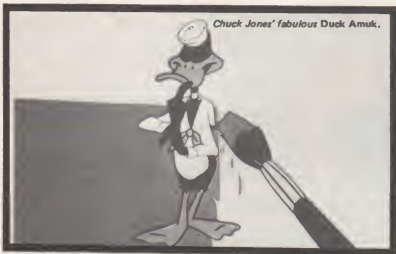
LIGHTS! CAMERA! AND CANNÉS AKK-SHUN!

David Cronenberg to film the unfilmable: William S. Burroughs' catatonic netherworld of bizarre erotica. *The Naked Lunch*. They're 're-conceiving' the book for Britain's Recorded Development Co. outfit behind Nic Roeg's *Dead Girls*... Missing from Cannes for once, another David C. for *Carradine*. But Keith had two films, including the horror thriller, *Blackout*. That'll puzzle filmographers. Bobby C. had a *Blackout* here in '78... Talking of brothers, the Blood Simple pair have a deal for four movies. Joel Coen directs the first, *Raising Arizona*, in September, with Ethan producing. They say they need a director for the fourth. Hear that, Sam Raimi?... Arnie Schwarzenegger vows: No more Conans... Rae Dawn Chong, adding humour to Arnie's Commando apparently, joins Whoopie Goldberg in Spielberg's *Colour Purple*, likely to end up as *Moon Song*... David Bowie, wisely out of the new 007 film, is one of two humans in Jim Henson's *Labyrinth*; writing the songs, too... Lord Lucas has shot a second Ewok *Adventure* tele-film... Mel Brooks' space satire, *Solarbabes*, on the go where the rain stays mainly on the plain... Drac's back and in search of Dracula's Disciple (a bishop, no less)... John Lithgow has joined The Manhattan Project... Amazing Story: Dustin Hoffman as Capt. Hook in Spielberg's *Peter Pan* next year. ♦

More on Cannes next month...

EXTRA

THINGS TO COME



This month we take an advance look at the Cambridge Animation Festival, which will take place from November 5-10th, at the Arts Theatre and Cinema, Market Passage, Cambridge.

The new board of directors for the Cambridge Animation Festival promise "a larger, more varied and more exciting programme" for the British Year of Animation. A bi-annual event, the festival's director, Irene Kotlarz, says that this year the festival will take on a different image, looking to attract a wider audience to the art of animation rather than just other animators. Consequently, the festival's theme is a popular one - *Telling Tales; "Narrative and scriptwriting in animated film"*.

What should be of special interest to animation fans is that Chuck Jones, the inimitable and influential creator of the "Roadrunner" shorts, will be contributing to the proceedings, along with Raymond Briggs, whose delightful *Snowman* was made into an award-winning animated feature. Briggs will be presenting works in progress for his new film, *When the Wind Blows* which, among other things, features music by David Bowie.

The list of other award-winning animators also in attendance is quite impressive, including Andrei Khrzhanovsky, the Soviet animator who made the acclaimed *Pushkin Trilogy*; Caroline Leaf from the National Film Board of Canada; Monique Renault, the feminist animator and prizewinner at the recent Paris Film Festival and Raoul Servais, whose film *Harpya* won the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1980.

But that's certainly not all folks, as there will be a contingent of leading

British animators showing their work, and special events focusing on computer animation, scriptwriting and adapting folk tales into animation. And you can get in on the act yourself, as practical workshops will be set up with the emphasis on animation for education, and in the Darkroom Gallery in Cambridge, visitors will have the opportunity to create their own animation effects, at the exhibition of Oskar Fischinger's pioneering experimental work.



Irene Kotlarz.

'Nuff said? Well, guess again, because comic fans can join in the activities at Kettle's Yard, which will be holding a special exhibition on contemporary comic strip art and animation. This has been jointly set up with Sheena Wagstaff, one of the organisers of the well-received Comic Art Show, which was held at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1983. A must!

For further information contact Irene Kotlarz, Festival Director, Cambridge Animation Festival, PO Box 332, London, N6 5HY. (01) 341 5015.

BEST OF BRITISH

While on the subject of animation, and for those who can't wait until the Cambridge Animation Festival, the National Film Theatre conclude their survey of British animation with a look at the last incredibly inventive decade of home-grown work. The finalised programmes are as follows:

Programme 1 (1975-77)

Thursday 15 Aug 6.30

Amateur Night (Thalma Goldman)

Café Bar (Alison de Vere)

Great (Bob Godfrey)

Transiberian Express (Rowland B Wilson, Russell Hall)

Tic-Tac: Bellboy (Richard Purdum)

Way Out (Ted Rockley)

Miracle of Flight (Terry Gilliam)

Freefall/Heart's Right (Ian Emes)

Max Beeza and the City in the Sky (Derek Hayes, Phil Austin)

Programme 2 (1978-81)

Sunday 18 Aug 8.45

Ubu (Geoff Dunbar)

The Oriental Nightfish (Ian Emes)

Hokusai (Tony White)

Samson Tobacco: Lion (Richard Purdum)

Jovan: The Power (Richard Williams)

Shell: Tempest (Russell Hall)

Mr Pascal (Alison de Vere)

Sketches for The Tempest (George Dunning)

Seaside Woman (Oscar Grillo)

Sunbeam (Paul Vester)

Animated Conversations: Filling Time (Andy Walker)

John Barleycorn (Nik Lever)

Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy

Babel Fish (Rod Lord)

Dilemma (John Halas)

The Comic Story (Russell Brooke)

Stanley (Thalma Goldman)

Programme 3 (1982-84)

Wednesday 28 Aug 6.30

Dreamland Express (David Anderson)

Three Knights (Mark Baker)

Snowman (extract) (Diane Jackson)

Pink Floyd: The Wall (extract) (Gerald Scarfe)

Second Class Mail (Allison Snowden)

Night Club (Jonathan Hodgson)

The Cabinet of Jan Svankmajer

(Brothers Quay, Keith Griffiths)

Christmas for Sale (Iain McCall)

Rupert and the Frog Song (Geoff Dunbar)

Conversation Pieces: Early Bird (Peter Lord, David Sproxtton)

Pleasure of Love (Rocky Morton, Annabel Jankel)

Sony: Swan Lake (Tony White)

Disprin: Boar (Tony White)

Punch 1984 (Greg Hill)

One Cal: Sweet Nothing (Russell Hall)

American Life: Tree: Introduction

(Richard Williams)



'Shaken but not Stirred'

A View to a Kill is the 14th Cubby Broccoli MGM-UA James Bond film, and Roger Moore's 1001th and, if the persistent rumors of replacement are to be believed, his last. Although he has spent more than thirty years in the acting business, Roger Moore came to prominence on the small screen, in the lead role for the *Ivanhoe* series, and later the *Alaskans*. It was with *The Saint* that Moore's career was boosted to star status. In 1973 Moore was offered his most regular acting assignment, that of super

spy James Bond. At the Pinewood Studios, where all the Bonds have been shot since *Dr. No* (1962), Tom Sciaccia talked with Roger Moore on the set of his latest film.

Starburst: They've started re-running *The Saint* after a long time in New York. It's interesting how a lot of the series pre-dates things that happened later on in the Bond series. I wouldn't say Ian Fleming borrowed from it, but I believe that *The Saint* somewhat influenced the Bond books.

Roger Moore: I don't think so. There's a similarity between all heroes in action-adventure.

When you were a kid what heroes did you have. Any from the serials, westerns, comic books?
I rather liked Ken Maynard. I remember when I was a kid, and Tom Mix.

How about Buster Crabbe or Johnny Weissmuller?
Johnny Weissmuller, not Buster Crabbe. Weissmuller was a great Tarzan.

When you started out you were a cartoonist. Did you want to do editorial cartoons?
No, no, I started as an animator.

As an in-betweenner?
Yeah. A tracer and then in-betweenner.

Since your first TV series, *Ivanhoe*, 25 years ago, you've been working, doing series after series. Do you thrive on constant work?
No, constant residuals. I like working. I mean years ago, a hundred years ago, Noel Coward said to me "Accept everything you're offered."

"And cut your hair."
Oh, you read that. You know, if you're offered two jobs take the one that pays the most. But unless you keep working you're not an actor. Because when you're not working you're not acting. I don't ▶



necessarily accept everything I'm offered.

When you first did *Maverick*, was that when Jack Warner was still at the studio?

Yeah. Jack Warner. He thought I was crazy, he was right.

That was toward the end of the great studio era.

Yeah, I was lucky and unlucky in a sense. Lucky because I was ever given a job in the first place. While I was finishing off *Ivanhoe* I was offered *The Miracle*, and then I started a contract with Warner Brothers. I actually did a *Maverick* before I replaced James Garner on the series. Roy Huggins offered me a wonderful teleplay by Marion Hargrove, who was the original creator of *Maverick*, and that's when the *Maverick* scripts were really first-rate. And then of course the first series I did at Warners was *The Alaskans*.

That was one season wasn't it?

Yeah, the snow melted very early that year.

Was that sort of based on *North to Alaska*, the John Wayne film?

No, it was an original.

Then right after that was *The Saint*.

No. While I was doing that I did *Rochel Code*, then *Gold of the Seven Saints*. Then I did *Maverick*. And then I came back to Europe and to the forgettable *Rape of the Sabines*. I also did another Italian film called *No Man's Land*.

One I've never seen.

Fortunately. And then they came up with *The Saint*. I thought that was going to be six months.

It's 118 episodes. In the US, television networks give a show a certain

number of episodes to prove itself, and then cancel it or renew it. British television seems to operate under a different system. Was there a big break between the black and white and colour episodes on *The Saint*?

No, no, what had happened was that the man who was running ITC, which was Lew Grade's distribution organization in America, didn't think *The Saint* was a network show, and he didn't do a sell on it at all. Sort of rushed it out and syndicated it. NBC then discovered that in their out of prime-time - when they went to local hours - this black and white series they had, *The Saint*, was beating all the opposition. And so, they decided then that they wanted it as a network show in colour. So we went straight into colour.

And that was two seasons. Whose decision was it to end the colour series?

Well, I think we'd all had enough. I'd

certainly had enough. It'd been going on for a long time and I wanted to do something else. So we made *Crossplot* for UA, and then I did a picture with EMI called *The Man Who Haunted Himself*.

Yes, a very good science-fantasy. Basil Dearden directed it.

The quality of *The Saint* is remarkable, compared with what's being done now.

Yes, I think we did very well. We set out to try and make it all look very attractive and glossy, with a certain panache. Obviously we were successful because the show ran for a long time. The network's biggest mistake was that they always treated *The Saint* as a summer replacement.

When Lew Grade was approached by Bob Baker and Monty Berman, his own partner, with the idea of making *The Saint*, Lew went along with it and they offered it to me. Lew said, "I think we should grey him up." He thought I looked too young for the part. (But) I still haven't greyed up for anything.

The next thing I did for television was *The Persuaders* with Tony Curtis. And I did that for about 13½ months. I think. Then I took over Brut Productions for a year, and the first picture I put together was *Touch of Class*. And then there was ... what's he called?

Bond?

Bond.

It's kind of interesting to speculate what those earlier Bond films would be like, what tone they would've taken had you done them instead of Sean Connery.

Sean's were very successful, so you can't say what would have happened. I think Sean was very right for Bond at that time, and the way they did it. I was not about to try and impersonate Sean.

Above: Unlikely team Bond (Roger Moore) and May Day (Grace Jones). Centre: Bond gunslinging on the Parisian national monument. Above right: A youthful Moore in the popular TV series *The Saint*. Centre right: Moore and View to a Kill co-star Tanya Roberts perch on San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, and below 007 and Zorin (Christopher Walken) battle it out.





It's interesting that the two of you were at MGM around the same time. No . . . I don't think he was under contract to MGM.

But you were good friends with him so it's amusing that the press tried to construct a battle between you two. Nothing to do with us.

I keep reading things that claim you were approached before Sean Connery to do *Dr. No*. Is that one of these stories or . . .

No, there was a short list, as Cubby says. And on the short list was Connery, Patrick McGeehan, myself, and I think Richard Johnson. I was already committed to *The Saint* anyway, so there was no way I could have done that.

When you first played Bond in 1973, did you expect that you'd be doing it ten years later?



No, I figured maybe that one would work. I knew that it would go on, but I didn't figure I would still be with it. I had just signed a deal for three films.

And since then it's been on a picture by picture basis. Yes.

Did you find it interesting that a few reviewers thought that *Octopussy* was much better than Sean Connery's *Never Say Never Again*. Well, it just goes to show that occasionally critics show good taste. Not very often.

Do you let reviews bother you? I remember the bad ones. I don't read them all. I don't believe the bad ones, cause I don't believe the good ones, you see. So I just don't believe them.

In *View To A Kill* how strenuous do

you find it working six months or more? It's a little strenuous, but it keeps me off the streets.

Is this one any easier than *Octopussy* where you had to go to India, with the heat . . .

We don't have any hot locations, thank god, which is a relief. We've had a few of those, and they're always agony. All the jumping around in dinner suits. Bond never sweats. You spend all your energy changing shirts.

Did you ever want to tell them to play Bond a little more realistically, sweating and . . .

Well, when it suits our purpose I can sweat and be untidy, but the main thing is the incongruity. Bond running around in strange climates wearing a white dinner jacket and looking impeccable. ►





How much input do you have on the writing of scripts. Are you involved in the script sessions?

Well, when I get a script I'm usually off somewhere else. I get the script and then I call and they all sit around the hall and listen to my comments.

I also read recently something about you producing, with Robert Baker, a new *The Saint* series.

Yes. We're planning on doing two or three at the moment - *The Saint* films.

Would this be theatrical or for television?

Theatrical. With a possible view to television in America.

Any possibility of you directing it?
There is a possibility, but it depends on my movements . . .

I would assume you will not be playing *The Saint*.
No, I'm not playing him.

You sound pretty busy. As far as directing goes, would you consider



Grace Jones as Zorin's stylish bodyguard May Day. Left: "Walter there's a man in my soup." 007 (Roger Moore) at the scene of an Eiffel Tower murder. Below left: Bond makes an unorthodox entrance into Zorin's mansion.

directing a future Bond film or co-producing one?
I'd consider anything. I'm very liberal.

I recently spoke with your director, John Glen, and he said he'd like to do a comedy with you. A non-Bond film . . .

Sounds like a good idea. Is that what John said? Well, good for him. Comedies are really difficult to find.

When you're not involved with Bond, looking for other properties, do you find it hard to get good scripts?
There are not that many good scripts around.

Are you trying to get away more from the action-orientated film. Maybe do more of a drama, a romance? . . .

Yeah, they make a pleasant change. I'd sort of like not to have to get soaked or blown up, even though my new film the *Naked Face* is a drama, with a bit of fisticuffs in it. But I'm on the wrong end of them. For once 'Bond' does not win - Roger Moore loses.

I'll have to ask the obvious. What is your favourite Bond film?

I can't say - I wouldn't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but I guess *The Spy Who Loved Me* is my favourite Bond film all the right elements together. ♦

A View on Bond

We couldn't let a feature on the new James Bond film pass by without our resident Bondsman, John Brosnan, providing his views on the further adventures of 007.

Advance word-of-mouth on this was that it was the worst James Bond yet, so I went to the screening prepared to suffer. Imagine my astonishment when I discovered that it wasn't half as bad as I expected. On the contrary, it ranks as probably the best Roger Moore/Broccoli Bond movie since *The Spy who Loved Me*. It may be just another sign of my brain softening due to advancing old age, but I even found Moore himself quite bearable in the role this time round. And despite his 57 years he looked younger and fitter than he did in *Octopussy*. Does this mean I've cracked up completely?

Not that I don't have criticisms of the movie. As usual it's too long. At least 20 minutes could have been lopped from its 2 hour 11 minute running time, and there are several sequences that slow the film down to a dead-stop (for ex-

ample, the sequence involving Fiona Fullerton's Russian agent). As usual, again, I found the sexual double entendres embarrassingly old fashioned and unamusing, with the exception of the one quipped by Bond (and no doubt ad-libbed by Moore) during the fire-engine chase sequence through San Francisco (as this is a family magazine I shall not elaborate).

But the reason — or one of them — why *A View to a Kill* works better than the last few Bonds is that the makers have returned to old formula of featuring a super-villain with an over-the-top villainous scheme. In this case it's a reworking of the plot of *Goldfinger* with the villain, Max Zorin (Christopher Walken, in a variable performance) planning to destroy California's micro-chip industries in order to increase the value of his own electronics empire, just as *Goldfinger* tried to increase the value of his gold stocks by destroying Fort Knox.

Another asset to the movie is grace Jones as Zorin's henchwoman May Day. She may not be a great actress, but she has a terrific screen presence, which is well exploited on this occasion. She also has an impressive death scene, going out with a bang reminiscent of Cagey's explosive cli-



007's astonishing, youthful agility helps him escape a wired lift. Below left: Bond gets soapy with KGB agent Pola (Fiona Fullerton).



max in *White Heat*. Unfortunately, however, the expected fight scene between her and Bond never occurs, which rather lets down the film's publicity campaign ("Has James Bond Finally Met His match?"), which suggests that such a confrontation will be the high point of the movie.

For me, of course, the high point of *A View to a Kill* was the airship (actually a Skyship 600 courtesy of Airship Industries, the former British company now owned by the aptly named Australian, Alan Bond). As I go weak at the

knees at the very sight of an airship, as readers of my column will know, any movie that features one automatically has me on its side — even a Roger Moore Bond movie.

I'm sure I'll be back to normal by the next issue. ♦

Starring: Roger Moore (*James Bond*), Christopher Walken (*Max Zorin*) Tanya Roberts (*Stacey Sutton*), Grace Jones (*May Day*), Tibbett (*Patrick Mac-Nee*). Directed by John Glen, Special Effects supervised by John Richardson. Produced by Albert R. Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson.

FILM REVIEWS

LEGEND

"(A) thoroughly realised and visually seductive fairy tale"

Not being especially fond of that brand of fantasy which traditionally defines itself through such obvious conceits as unicorns, goblins and elves, I approached Ridley Scott's *Legend* with much wariness. That caveat aside, *Legend* proved to be one of the most thoroughly realised and visually seductive fairy tales I've seen this side of Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*.

The allusion to *Beauty and the Beast* is quite deliberate, as it's one of the many stylistically different fantasies neatly draped over *Legend*'s skeletal storyline. *Legend*'s ambience owes as much to Arthur Rackham as Frank Frazetta, and as much to The Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian

Andersen as A Midsummer Night's Dream and Tolkien. However, by investing the surface details with such astonishing vitality and visual flair, Scott and Co. have reconstructed the classic fairy tale writ wide and vivid.

In a world cast into the deepest winter by the seizure of a magical alicorn, a champion must be found. Jack O'the Green, a forest youth, dubiously takes up the mantle, and accompanied by an intrepid band of fairies and elves, sets off to recover the precious unicorn's horn from the evil Lord of Darkness. Meanwhile, Jack's love, and the unwitting cause of their paradise lost, Princess Lili, has fallen into the clutches of the dark lord while trying to recover the alicorn herself. Besotted with Lili's innocence, Darkness woos her with promises of riches and power. The two must sacrifice the last unicorn to fulfil Darkness's dream of eternal night. Can Jack stop the slaughter in time?

No points for guessing the answer. And no points for originality either. The plot has been pared down to the essential ingredients of the quest, the characters being little more than

ciphers. Where the film scores is in Ridley Scott's firm grip on the direction. From Darkness's swamplocked subterranean stronghold to the verdant and lustrous 'outside' world, the imagery is potent, the production and photography sumptuous, and the action executed with characteristic verve and tension.

Also worth the price of entry is Tim Curry's exuberant performance as Darkness, a demonic Pan-like figure which, enhanced by Rob Bottin's wonderful make-up, exudes sexual and bestial menace with every turn of his horned head, and every flex of his second skin.

Ultimately, *Legend* remains a stunning faerie floss fantasy. Ninety-five minutes of lovingly crafted, 'super real' escapism.

James Olsen

Starring: Tom Cruise (Jack), Mia Sara (Lili), Tim Curry (Darkness), David Bennent (Gump). Directed by Ridley Scott. Written by William Hjortsberg. Produced by Arnon Milchan and Tim Hampton. 95 mins.



A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

"The wildest moments to be had in the horror cinema for ages"

Wes Craven redeems himself somewhat with *A Nightmare On Elm Street* after his last two below-par efforts, *Swamp Thing* and *The Hills Have Eyes 2*. It's a better than average, slick super-shocker that is as warped and twisted as anyone could wish – and not in a depressing way either like his *Last House on the Left*. The central demented psycho, Fred Krueger, while not quite in the same superior class as *The Shape*, certainly seems set to give Jason a run for his money by cashing in on our subconscious fears and neuroses.

In *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, getting a good night's sleep can severely damage your health! It details, with some originality, the identical nightmare four teenagers share concerning a deceased child molester who returns to haunt their dreams, Heather Langenkamp's in particular. She plays Nancy, the daughter of police chief John Saxon and a drunken Renee Blakely who are both hiding a dark secret. Before long her best friend has been thrown around her bedroom ceiling, her date strangled with a sheet and Nancy's own boyfriend is brutally destroyed. Soon Nancy realises that the only way to stop the vengeance crazed maniac is to drag him into reality and confront him on her own terms with the help of a booby-trapped house.

Craven expertly layers nightmare within nightmare within dreams which admittedly leads to a fairly predictable, and silly, climax. But that doesn't stop *A Nightmare On Elm Street* from being a very acceptable genre piece by anyone's standards, considering the state of the art at the moment. What does deflate its initial promise somewhat is a script that deteriorates rapidly towards the end. It offers more humour, unintentional or otherwise for instance (Blakely hitting the bottle with farcical frequency) than one would have thought necessary, which greatly lessens the overall uncomfortable impact.

The low budget special effects by Jim Doyle though, are positively ace. They run the inspirational gamut between *Videodrome* and *Poltergeist* and deliver the wildest moments to be had in the horror cinema for ages. Craven's visual free rein which upturns conventional expectation is the major force in the film and pulls some of the scappier moments together. This, and Heather Langenkamp's virtuoso performance, go a long way toward keeping strained credibility intact.

But whatever *A Nightmare On Elm Street*'s faults, it is a film that lingers in the memory. And it is good to see Wes Craven back at the sure helm of a project that repairs some of the damage done to his reputation of late.

Alan Jones

Starring: John Saxon (Lieutenant Thompson), Renee Blakely (Marge Thompson), Heather Langenkamp (Nancy Thompson), Amanda Wylls (Tina Grey), Nick Corri (Rod Lance), Johnny Depp (Glen Lance). Directed by **Wes Craven**. Screenplay by **Wes Craven**. Produced by **Robert Shaye**.



NOMADS

"Grips from the opening frames"

In this day and age *Nomads* could almost be accused of blandness as it comes across as a TV movie that has miraculously been re-routed to the big screen. But in all fairness, it grips from the opening frames, failing to let go despite a general petering off towards the end.

Based on the novel by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, *Nomads* tells of a spiritual twilight world where the dead have returned in the guise of L.A. punks ever roaming the streets to humiliate and mutilate on a whim. Lesley Anne Down, in her best role for ages, is newly arrived Dr. Eileen Flax whose first patient is a raving freaked-out anthropologist, Jean Charles Pommier, played by heart throb Pierce Brosnan. In total trauma, Pommier whispers a meaningless phrase into Eileen's ear and then promptly dies. From that point on her life changes as she unwillingly begins to live out Pommier's past existence and the events that led to his death. To the hospital staff and friends it seems like she is

having as nervous breakdown. But to Pommier's wife Veronique, it means the route to understanding what caused her husband's death, and his possible salvation in the light of the terrifying secret he uncovered.

In *Nomads* (a terrible title) director John McTiernan creates a telling atmosphere by giving the audience shorthand images of subtle terror. None more so than in the chilling encounter with Nina Foch (playing a spectral nun).

What gives *Nomads* its major lift though, are the dual personality changes between Brosnan and Down which keep occurring to constantly knock you off guard, and which ensure interest is kept up. With the added attraction of watching Adam Ant play a strong, silent, wandering spirit, and doyen of exploitation, Mary Woronov, *Nomads* is an effective, if low key movie, that should be worthy of more attention than it is probably going to get.

Alan Jones

Starring: Lesley Anne Down, Pierce Brosnan, Anna-Maria Montecelli, Adam Ant, Josie Cotton, Frank Doubleday, Hector Mercado, Mary Woronov. Directed by **John McTiernan**. Produced by **George Pappas** and **Cassian Elwes**. Written by **John McTiernan**. Music by **Bill Conti**.



Top: A burning assault by Robert Englund on Renee Blakely in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Above: A scene from *Nomads*.

FRIDAY THE 13TH. PART V—A NEW BEGINNING

"The best sequel so far"

Did anyone really believe that *Final Chapter* rubbish? Nevertheless, Jason Voorhees gets another good run for your money in the capable hands of *Savage Streets* director, Danny Steinmann. This is the best sequel so far. It has more characterisation than expected at this late stage in the "Carry On" gore series and a far more welcome sense of humour. Some of it even shows touches of John Waters-type inspiration. And the numerous deaths aren't dwell on so much

as to become a turn-off. It's back to that old cliché of a roller-coaster ride and this is one of the classiest.

Part V begins and ends with a nightmare. Emotionally scarred Tommy Jarvis, the little boy who killed off Jason last time round, has now grown into 18-year-old actor John Shepherd. As the film opens he is being moved from the Unger Mental Institute to the more liberal open-plan Pinehurst. Tommy is still haunted by the memory of Jason in his nightmares and the moment he morosely arrives at the leafy secluded "rest home", an inmate goes berserk and chops another to pieces. This triggers off the appearance of a Jason clone seeking revenge and so begins the dope-taking foul-mouthed body count. It is left up to den mother Melinda Kinnaman to wield the chainsaw this time round and make sure Jason bites the dust. Or does she?

Methods of dispatch include eye stabbing, cranium crushing, beheading, flares in mouths and endless variations on the machete theme. But Steinmann directs all this with a freshness that breathes life into the hackneyed and ludicrous proceedings. Most of the comic relief comes courtesy of a tongue-in-cheek script, and especially from a profane hillbilly Ma Kettle-style character and her illiterate son. On whichever level you care to look at it *Friday the 13th, Part V—A New Beginning* is always extremely entertaining. I screamed, shivered and shook with laughter. And unlike certain characters in the movie, I definitely don't have any axe to grind!

Alan Jones

Starring: John Shepherd (Tommy Jarvis), Shavar Ross (Reggie), Melanie Kinnaman (Pam), Richard Young (Dr Matthew Peters). Directed by **Danny Steinmann.**



Friday the 13th Part V. Melanie Kinnaman takes a lesson in "Chainsaw" warfare.

WHEN THE RAIN BEGINS TO FALL

"Silly, but fun minor genre entry"

Although it tries too hard for instant cult appeal, *When the Rain Begins to Fall* is a silly, but fun, minor entry into the genre. Originally known as *Voyage of the Rock Aliens*, the new title comes from star Pia Zadora's and Jermaine Jackson's Euro-disco hit song.

Quite simply a Martian Beach Party movie for the nuclear age, *When the Rain Begins to Fall* has student Pia attending Heidi High School in the

town of Spellburgh. As Dee Dee, she is having trouble with her boyfriend Frankie who won't let her front his Rockabilly band. So when some visiting aliens emerge from a telephone box with a talking fire hydrant as their guide, she grabs the chance to join their electro-pop inspired group. Predictably she falls for the leader but learns ultimately that the emotionless world he comes from—complete with sexual response simulation—is really no substitute for earthbound Frankie.

James Fargo directs all these MTV rock video style shenanigans with an unsentimental slickness and verve, even though the joke wears as thin as the budget. But there are delights on the way like Ruth Gordon's gun-toting sheriff, *The Hills Have Eyes* star Michael Berryman plus chainsaw and numer-

ous songs such as "Combine Man" and "Where would we be in the 21st. Century". The climactic nod to Fifties SF exploitation doesn't go amiss either.

Poor old Pia Zadora will never be taken seriously but she valiantly throws herself into the thankless Annette Funicello role and emerges as a likeable and surprisingly endearing performer. As stupid and dumb as *When the Rain Begins to Fall* is, I have to admit to finding it a very agreeable time-waster indeed.

Alan Jones

Starring: Pia Zadora, Tom Nolan, Craig Sheffer, Ruth Gordon, Michael Berryman. Directed by **James Fargo.** Written by **S. James Guidotti, Edward Gold and Charles Hairston.** Produced by **Micheline Keller and Brian Russell.**

The Great British Animators

Richard Williams

◆

Since making his first animated short in 1958, Richard Williams had made a vital contribution to the field of cinematic and commercial animation. From credit sequences for the series of Pink Panther films, to the Emmy winner Ziggy's Gift he has won many awards, and is deep in his latest project The Thief, which, he hopes, will prove that the Golden Age of Animation is not dead. In this second of a series of articles on British animators Richard Holliss talks to Richard Williams about animated commercials and making animation commercial.



Richard Williams was born in Toronto, Canada in 1933. As both his parents were illustrators, he felt a certain affinity to drawing, and by the age of sixteen was earning a living as a commercial artist. His main interest, however was animation and during his teens he found the opportunity to visit the Disney Studios.

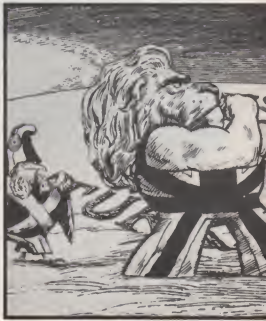
"I didn't want to work at Disney's," he remembers, "in fact I never got to work there and now I guess, I never will." He makes the last comment good humouredly, for his own success in the animation industry has assured a financial future for his London based company, with a long list of impressive credits.

There was a time, however, when he would have preferred to have been a serious painter: "I saw a Rembrandt when I was sixteen, and lost interest in animation. Then suddenly I had the idea for *The Little Island*. I realised that I couldn't stand the art world, the idea of painting only for galleries. I suppose *The Little Island* was a deliberately

◆

The *New York Times* once described film animator Richard Williams as possessing "popping eyes, flailing arms and roller coaster voice... like a Disney cartoon come to life."

It's an affectionate description that certainly sums up the character of one of this country's top animators. Yet Richard Williams' success in the field of film animation is truly international. Since 1958 and his first cartoon short, *The Little Island*, he has won numerous awards, including diplomas, certificates of merit, British Academy Awards, Silver awards, Bronze awards and even an Oscar. This he won for his 26-minute animated mini-feature - *A Christmas Carol*, in 1972.





philosophical cartoon, and I'm now rather ashamed that I started all that rubbish." Like before, this last comment makes him smile. "I animated, painted and shot over half of it myself. In some ways *The Thief* is the sequel, but this time with all the commercial expertise."

The Thief is Richard Williams' lifework, and it certainly seems like it, having been in production for over 15 years). It combines the many talents of his own animators with the experience of the grand masters of the Golden Age of Animation. Among the luminaries to help on the picture are such artists as Grim Natwick, Art Babbitt and Ken Harris. Both Natwick and Babbitt worked at Disney's on films like *Snow White*, *Pinocchio* and *Fantasia*. Unlike some of his London based rivals, Williams is a firm believer in the Golden Age of Animation. "Many of the old, great animators from the marvellous Disney era have developed a fear that they and their highly developed artistry and craft are in danger of dying out, never to be replaced by the younger individual 'stylists'..."

In fact, while Richard Williams was working in America, on the feature length cartoon *Raggedy Ann and Andy*, he was able to take samples of the work along to the Disney studios and show the veteran animators how it was progressing. Unfortunately *Raggedy Ann and Andy* was a disappointing project for Williams. He feels that the film was rushed by the money men behind the company that made it, and it therefore lacked any heart. As it's never been seen in Britain, we can't judge for ourselves. It also made him cautious regarding the finance of his own feature, *The Thief*. Most of the money poured into its creation has come from his work on a variety of television advertising. Award winning commercials have included, *Tic Tac*, *Cresta Bear*, *Johnson and Johnson*, *Corona*, and more recently the highly impressive *Shell* oil refinery, adverts. His studio have also been responsible for credits on major feature films, including *What's New Pussycat*, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Murder on the Orient Express* and the *Pink Panther* films. "Ken Harris did two thirds of *Return of the Pink Panther*. Being a very modest man, he said when it was finished 'That's the best job I've ever done', I didn't agree, I think his best work is in *The Thief*. We enjoyed working on the *Pink Panther* movies, we didn't even prepare a storyboard. Blake Edwards just left us alone because he was confident in what we were doing."

Above left: Richard Williams (left) picks up a few trade secrets from animator Art Babbitt. **Below:** A scene for Tony Richardson's *Charge of the Light Brigade* created by Richard Williams' studio. **Right:** Williams' title sequence for *The Return of the Pink Panther*, with the Panther as Cecil B. de Mille.



A *Christmas Carol* was produced in conjunction with Chuck Jones, veteran animator of *Bugs Bunny* and the *Roadrunner*. It cost £120,000 to make and took over nine months. "We took immense pride in it" Williams remembers. "We took no short cuts in the number of drawings in order to save money. In the States we would have to produce a certain amount of footage per week. In Britain it's different." A *Christmas Carol* is a wonderful film for not only is it eloquently animated, but it boasts some outstanding voice credits, including the talents of Alastair Sim, Michael Hordern and Sir Michael Redgrave.

For Williams' uncompleted feature *The Thief*, he has also brought together some excellent voices for the new characters, Vincent Price, Anthony Quayle, Donald Pleasance, Stanley Baxter, Joan Sims, Kenneth Williams, Windsor Davies and George Melly. The story is a carefully protected secret, although it is common knowledge that it tells of a thief who steals three golden balls. Their loss invites destruction upon the city in the

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form of the evil Zig Zag, it has been known as the '2001st Arabian Night.'

Judging by some of the illustrations and character sheets that accompany *The Thief* project, it should be a most enjoyable movie. Inspired by the genius of the great animators, Williams told Kay Krizwiser in *The Toronto Globe Mail*, 'They knew how to draw. Natwick went to Austria in the beginning and learned from Gustav Klimt. I went crazy when I first saw the drawings of Egon Schiele. He drew like an animator. So did Edgar Degas. You see, animation is the science of drawing movement, the craft of movement. Degas knew it. An animator should be able to draw like a Degas...' This is a theory that Williams has strived to put into practice. He rejects computer animation as stunting the creative effort. If one takes a look at some of the intricate sequences of *The Thief*, it's easy to see that there's a lot of truth in what he says. The Golden Age of Animation is not dead, but alive and well at Richard Williams' Animation in Soho Square.

A selection of Richard Williams animation credits.

A Christmas Carol (Academy Award Winner 1973).

The Little Island (British Academy Award 1958).



The Charge of the Light Brigade (Sequences and Titles).

The Return of the Pink Panther (Sequences and Titles).

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (Titles).

James Bond-Casino Royale (Sequences and Titles).

Love Me, Love Me, Love Me (Short Film).

What's New Pussycat? (Titles).

Murder on the Orient Express (Sequences and Titles).

The Pink Panther Strikes Again (Sequences and Titles).

Raggedy Ann and Andy (Childrens feature).

Ziggy's Gift (Emmy Winner 1983).

Commercial clients include:

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Schweppes,
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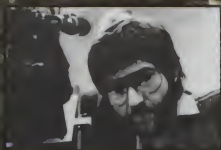


Top and bottom: Scenes from *The Thief*.

LIFEFORCE

Tobe Hooper's latest excursion into terror is the SF horror film *Lifeforce*, based on Colin Wilson's SF novel *The Space Vampires*. It's a far cry from his humble low-budget beginning with the trend-setting *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, which brought him to the attention of William Friedkin at Warners, for whom he directed *Salem's Lot*. Since then he's helmed *Funhouse* and *Poltergeist*. Tom Sciacca recently spoke to Tobe Hooper about *Lifeforce* and forthcoming projects, including an update of the William Cameron Menzies SF classic, *Invaders from Mars*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part II* and *Spider-Man*.

Starburst: What attracted you to Colin Wilson's *Space Vampires*, which you've adapted for *Lifeforce*. It's been floating around with Cannon for a few years hasn't it?



Tobe Hooper: Right. And before that Dino De Laurentiis had it. It's like a lot of properties that go around for years until someone finds the right lynch-pin to make it work. And Menachem (Golan) had it for several years and he sent Colin Wilson's novel over and I read it and got excited about it because it wasn't at all like vampires as we know vampires. Hammer films and such, and Universal Pictures, as far as that goes, has taught us about vampires. Are you familiar with it?

I have the press notes and they suggest that the 'Vampires' are more like energy-sucking . . .

Yeah, right. They take your "lifeforce" I mean that's what they need to survive. And more than that, it's more than using up the energy. The energy is transferable into another life-form.

Is that the bat-creature?

No, no, that is a form they once had. This alien strain has had many forms. They're shape-changers, depending upon the situation. That is one of their original forms

though, that weird, bat-like thing. They evolve during the picture into yet another form. What interested me was that it was a piece that I could . . . it was rather spiritual. About the genesis of the vampire legend, which was what was really attractive to me.

Do you find yourself comfortable working with an independent, rather than say a few years ago when you were under contract to Universal and you only managed to make one film - *Funhouse*?

Oh, yeah. This is a much better situation. It's a good situation for anybody who really wants to get on with making movies. I mean my experience in the past year with Menachem and Yoram (Globus) has just been fantastic and nothing but encouraging. No bullshit. Nothing political. Menachem is more like I would imagine a Thalberg or a Louis Mayer, or those people who used to go out and make movies and said "Go start shooting a picture." Show business runs through their blood and veins, so there just isn't that political intrigue that sometimes cloaks the whole project you're working on and sometimes smother and ruins it.

Some of the effects in *Lifeforce* look great. Is that all a full-size set?

Oh yeah. The entirety of Stage Six at EMI, which is the STAR WARS stage. In fact,

Full page: An outside view of the alien ship. Centre: Director Tobe Hooper. Below: Steve Railsback plays Carlsen, a US astronaut able to communicate telepathically with the psychic vampire in its earthly form (Mathilda May).



one of those sets is probably the largest miniature ever built, which is the interior of the alien ship. The miniature is fifty feet by fifty feet high by about two-hundred feet long. And that was used for the Vistavision plates that John Dykstra did. The astronauts going EVA are already married into the image.



Did you get help from NASA as far as the spacesuits go?

Yeah, we got a lot of good co-operation with them.

The budget for *Lifeforce* is also about double that of *Pottergeist*.

Oh yeah. And further back, *Texas Chainsaw* was done on something like \$150,000.

And *Lifeforce* is \$20 million. . .

Lifeforce is in at around \$25 million actually. And that's just on the screen. That's without studio overhead. There's really a lot of money up on the screen. More than if it had gone through MGM, where part of your budget goes to overhead and isn't 'actual' money.

Like renting a chair that MGM owns.

Right. But this was like direct money. The look of the picture is enormous. John Graysmark who designed *Ragtime*, was my production designer. A production designer in the English tradition doesn't necessarily mean that this is the guy that designs the set. It means he designs the behind-the-scenes production of when a set is delivered for shooting on the day that you're to arrive. Although he did do a lot of the personal designing of the sets, he had three art directors under him and that entire department, including Graysmark, go back to 2001, working under Tony Masters. John Graysmark really was incredibly helpful. We built six blocks of London on the back lot at EMI, which we burned. We had spirit



decker buses go up in balls of flame. And there's also this vampiric energy bolt which sucks up souls that we've got raging down the street and diving into tube stations.

So you built tube stations also?

The exteriors. The interior we shot in a real tube station, on one Sunday, where we had three-hundred extras trampling down the ramps as their spirits were being sucked out by this blinding spectral light that is swirling by. It was very exciting.

The female vampire was excellent

I think you'll really like Mathilda May. She was really hard to find, and after screentesting quite a number of actresses, finally—magically—a week before shooting started I found the right person. Had I looked another five years there's no way I could have done better. I think movie buffs and fans will be delighted with her.

How did you like working in England?

Well, I loved it. I loved working with the crew. I had a fantastic crew. Allan Hume, who did *Return of the Jedi*, shot it and lit it. It was a long shoot, like six months, but anyway I know I'll go back next year.



THE RED MENACE

Could you explain your approach to *Invaders from Mars*.

Well, I'm sticking to the William Menzies version as far as its surreal look goes. That will be the only thing that will be slightly divorced from reality. But I'm making it believable. I think I can ground it fairly reasonably in credibility. It's really a very good script and interpretation that Dan O'Bannon and Don Jacoby have done for me.

Of course they're great fans of Fifties SF material also aren't they?

Oh yeah, absolutely. Menzies' *Invaders* is a favourite cult piece. It's paranoid and it's relentless too, once it starts going. In its case it literally did have a time-bomb ticking away at the end. There will be a similar scene in the remake.

Do you have any stars set for *Invaders*? Just two so far. Little Hunter Carson, who was in *Paris, Texas*, and Karen Black, as Hunter's mother.

Is John Dykstra going to be doing the



Opposite page, bottom left: London in flames! Centre left: The alien ship absorbing lifeforce from London. Above left: The Right Stuff! A behind-the-scenes littoli. Left: The Anglo-US team of astronauts explore the inside of the alien vessel. Above right: Colonel Colin Caine (Peter Firth) tries to destroy one of the off-world succubi.

effects for that also?

Yeah, I really love working with John.

Could we talk about *Texas Chainsaw Massacre II*?

Well, I'll be producing *Texas Chainsaw II* starting in November. Most likely be shooting it in Texas again. I plan to do a reconnaissance down there to see exactly where to shoot it. It's about what happened ten years later. It'll be scary and funny, stylistically in keeping with part one.

We were making jokes about a \$20 million dollar sequel to a \$100,000 film.

No. Somehow it would be a violation to go overboard like that. It will have a reasonable working budget, whereas when we made *Texas Chainsaw Massacre I* we were out there working for nothing and giving it plenty. I'll keep the budget within reason and shoot it in Texas. It will make it a little more reasonable and I think it should be true to the first piece. It doesn't have great special effects in it. It has a visceral quality about it, which is its energy. It isn't the giant things coming from the sky or from



below or from inner space. It's from reality.

Like the cousins of Ed Gein.

Right!

HORROR HISTORY

What with Robert Bloch's *Psycho* and then *Texas Chainsaw I*. . . Maybe you're the only person who could do a true story based on what this Gein guy did? No one would believe it was true.

Yeah, it would be really frightening. I mean frightening for a director, especially me, to approach that realistically, the way *In Cold Blood* was done. Maybe there are some doors that should be left closed.

Except that it all happened 25 years ago. It's so strange.

It really is. It's the bogeyman, really. I mean the *real* bogeyman. It kind of reminded me of the campfire stories, and a bit of EC comics. My approach to making the first picture was similar to that of the EC comics.

That's another link between you and Dan O'Bannon, who was also a fan of EC comics.

Grew up on it, so to speak. It burned holes in our brains.

SUPER-SPIDER-MAN

The last thing I want to ask you about is *Spider-Man*, of course, which is a bit of a surprise.

That'll be a lot of fun. That starts shooting early next year. Most likely in London. I haven't selected the writers for it yet. All I can really tell you is that it would start at the beginning. . .

Peter Parker, high-school student, and all that.

Yeah. But I want to hire a screenwriter that will flesh that out. Get more into it. That

picture will take at least a year to make.

Should be interesting considering the horrendous television series.

I think this'll be more like *Superman*, when Dick Donner showed us that *Superman* was more fun on the big screen.

What did you think of the *Superman III*?

I didn't care for it. I don't know the circumstances or anything really about it. It just looks like someone was trying to get the job over with and go home. Either that or it just wasn't very well thought out.

Have you any other plans?

I want to do something with a bit of comedy. In fact, after *Spider-Man*, what I want to do is a musical. A kind of new-wave format. I'm really very interested in a musical. Not a traditional piece, but I think something that would go much better today within a musical, within that framework. I believe you can take the audience to many, many new places and really take them on a magic carpet ride into a world where you have no credibility problems. You don't have to deal with reality at all.

Of course you did the Billy Idol video, so that kind of gave you a taste of that.

Yeah, I really enjoyed that. I'd like to do a feature with Billy Idol too. If our schedules ever come together I expect we will do a feature together. I wanted Billy to be in *Lifeforce*. There was a perfect part but he had scheduling problems with a concert, as well as some problems with British Equity. . . (but) then you have to have a balance too if you want to be part of the Eady system, part of the British community where there are budgetary advantages. Or you can just forget that and take your crew to Europe or London to shoot a picture the American way, which would be extremely expensive. ♦



COLIN WILSON

Can a novel about vampires from outer space be part of a serious philosophical investigation into the meaning of human existence? Yes – when the Author is Colin Wilson. His novel *The Space Vampires* has now been adapted to the screen and retitled as *Lifeforce*, under the directorship of Tobe Hooper. *Lisa Tuttle* tracked him down to Cornwall where he discussed his feelings about the making of the film and psychic vampires.

i n t e r

The *Space Vampires*, which has now become the film *Lifeorce*, although a novel of ideas, is anything but dull or slow-moving. Wilson has always felt the urge to communicate his ideas to the general public, and when writing fiction has been most attracted to the detective story and the science fiction novel.

Born in Leicester in 1931, Wilson was largely self-educated. In 1956 he became an overnight sensation with the publication of his first book, *The Outsider*. In the book he identified the modern problem of the brilliant, anti-social "outsider" searching for meaning in an apparently meaningless world. In later works, including *Religion and the Rebel*, *The Strength to Dream*, *Introduction to the New Existentialism* and *Beyond the Outsider*, he continued to grapple with questions of freedom, intentionality and human potential, but he fell from critical favour, himself too much an "outsider" to be accepted in the cultural mainstream.

In the early Seventies, Wilson developed a reputation as an expert on all things supernatural, appearing on television, editing a line of books, researching and writing such studies as *The Occult*, *Mysteries*, *Poltergeist!*, *Strange Powers* and *The Psychic Detectives*.

Colin Wilson is also known as a crime writer, and some find his obsession with sex and violence suspicious and possibly dangerous. His first novel, *Ritual in the Dark*, was so convincing in its depiction of the mind of a Ripper-like murderer that, twenty years after publication, police turned up to interview Wilson, to find out if he had any inside information about the killer then at large known as the Yorkshire Ripper. One of Wilson's most recent books is the encyclopedic study of human violence, *A Criminal History of Mankind*.

His reputation as a science fiction writer is only now beginning to grow, although *The Space Vampires* was first published in 1976, and will obviously be influenced by the public response to *Lifeorce*. His current project is also science fiction, a novel called *Spiderworld* which depicts an earth dominated by gigantic, telepathic spiders who have enslaved humanity. Forthcoming in the autumn from Grafton Books (formerly Granada) is Colin Wilson's new novel, *The Personality Surgeon*, which he describes as "almost science fiction. It's about a kind of psychiatric Sherlock Holmes, a psychiatrist who can pin down anyone's psychological problems by observing their physical characteristics for a few minutes, and about a new method of

altering people's personalities by making them fully aware of precisely how they appear to others."

Despite the wide variety of topics covered over the course of more than fifty books, Colin Wilson has said that basically they are all about the same thing. He is still exploring the same philosophical questions with which he began his writing career.

"The basic idea behind all my work is these odd states of almost mystical consciousness in which you feel that everything is marvellous – what G. K. Chesterton called the feeling of 'absurd good news.' When we feel this, it seems so obvious that life is entirely good and we ought to live in a continuous state of ecstasy. And then of course we wake up the next morning and the state seems to have evaporated and we're 'down to earth' again. It is these states which are the opposite of feeling down to earth, of being tied to the material, present reality,

to what you might call occult faculties. The notion that people already possess powers which are far greater than they realize and yet don't know how to use them has always been one of the things that most interests me.

"It also bothered me that we're living in an age of such pessimism, and that where literature is concerned, everything seems to end with the death of the hero. I've always hated this assumption of defeat, and it seems to me it should be possible to create heroes who actually do heroic things without being comic book heroes. I wanted to find new dimensions for the hero to move in, and it seemed obvious that new dimension should be a dimension of mental conquest – in other words, of Faculty X.

"In *The Space Vampires*, the psychiatrist Fallada tells the hero Carlsen (Carlsen in the film *Lifeorce*) his theory of vampirism – that it is to do with the actual sucking of vitality. He points out that you



which have always fascinated me. And then when I began to write about the occult in the late Sixties I realised that this was just another aspect of this mystical business which had always fascinated me – that what I was really saying is that human beings appear to have mental powers of which they are totally unaware.

"One of the central points of *The Occult* was what I called 'Faculty X' – that is the sudden ability of human beings to become strangely aware of other times and other places as if they were actually here. And it was obvious that this 'Faculty X' was not only imaginative identification, or intuition, but must be closely connected

Steve Railsback and Peter Firth(right) attempt to subdue Patrick Stewart, who is possessed by alien creatures.

sometimes talk to people who completely drain you of vitality and leave you exhausted. He demonstrates this to Carlsen by showing him a moray eel in a tank eating an octopus. Fallada has an instrument which measures the life-field of the eel and the octopus, and how the eel gains more life-force after eating the octopus. This is not entirely science fiction, since I based it on experiments done by Harold Burr at Harvard in the 1930s. Burr was able to show that there was a very fine electrical field connected ▶



"The basic idea behind all my work is these odd states of mystical consciousness, in which you feel that everything is marvellous."

with life, with vitality, and that this field alters when vitality lapses – if a plant is dying, for example, or an animal has cancer. He could even tell by the change in the field if a woman was ovulating.

"I'm also very interested in hypnosis, and with the idea of intentionality and the will, so for me all this ties together.

Although on the surface it may appear to be not very serious science fiction, in fact it is nevertheless a junction of certain ideas."

Yet the idea for the novel came not from an intellectual puzzle, but from a sort of vision Wilson had just before falling asleep. "As I closed my eyes I suddenly had this curious vision of an enormous spaceship – fifty miles long and twenty miles deep – full of holes, and floating through space like some kind of enormous Dracula's Castle in the sky. I thought, how magnificent! And began to brood about what it meant, and in the five minutes before I actually fell asleep, I had worked out the whole first part of the novel. The next morning I told the story to my publisher, who told me to write it, and I did. It flowed very easily, and almost as

soon as it was published it was optioned by Dino de Laurentiis."

But the de Laurentiis film was never made, nor was the television special proposed by one of Wilson's friends, and even after Cannon Films had optioned it, years passed without a word, leaving Wilson to reflect that this was, after all, his thirteenth novel...

"Then about eighteen months ago I was delighted to hear they were going ahead with the film. I was also very cheered when I heard that Tobe Hooper was doing it, because I'd seen *Salem's Lot* which I thought was very good, and I was very impressed by *Polltergeist*. When I wrote to him I got a very charming letter back, saying how he'd always wanted to do the novel, and inviting me to the studio.

"As it turned out, the day I happened to be in London and decided to go to the studio there was almost nobody there, because they were shooting the night sequences and not working days. But I did get shown all over the sets, which I found absolutely fantastic.



"At one point I walked around a corner and thought, I recognize this, and then realised that it was Trafalgar Square, complete with London buses! Then I went into a huge barn of a place, big as a cathedral, and there was a giant chunk of a spaceship – just a tiny piece of it, but it was as big as the side of a house. And then there were the models, for close-ups."

The spaceship looked nothing like the

one he had imagined. "It was obvious they'd made a lot of very basic changes. They'd turned the spaceship, as far as I could see, into something like a huge, floating vegetable. But I thought the changes they'd made were very good and imaginative. They had some beautiful ideas I wish I'd thought of, like making people's heads explode. They decided that if a vampire is kept in confinement for more than twenty-four hours, so that he can't steal more energy, that his head will explode. Marvellous idea."

Asked whether he thought psychic vampires could really exist, Wilson was definite. "I'm convinced that a lot of people are unconscious psychic vampires. They do drain you dry. They don't mean to do it, but... quite unconsciously, they are determined to suck something out of you. They are always people with nothing to give."

The idea of vampirism was not exhausted for Wilson by the one novel, and he has been considering writing a sequel in collaboration with the American

"It seems to me it should be possible to create heroes who actually do heroic things without being comic book heroes."

science fiction writer A. E. Van Vogt. "When I knew the film was going ahead I began to think about a sort of *Return of the Space Vampires*. It would be set about twenty years after the time of *The Space Vampires*, and the hero is a psychiatrist, Richard Carlsen, son of the Carlsen of the original book. He's always been fascinated by vampires, and when he is consulted by a woman who has obviously fallen under the spell of some sort of psychic vampire, he sets out determined to trap the vampire. But he himself is trapped, and then learns that this is a different sort of vampire – in fact, a member of a race of benevolent vampires who have been on the earth for a long time and never destroyed or even harmed anyone: they suck energy from human beings in the same way that human beings take milk from cows.

"Carlsen himself is given the opportunity to become at least partially a vampire, and partially telepathic, and he learns a great deal. Then he finds out that there are some malevolent space vampires heading for the earth, and that the benevolent vampires have decided



Lifeforce stars Peter Firth as a special agent investigating mysterious happenings in London, and Methilda May as the deadly space vampire who comes to earth in search of human energy.



there is nothing they can do, and so have accepted their doom. But Carlsen explains that human beings have a very strong sense of purpose, unlike the vampires, and cannot lie down and accept anything as inevitable. Humanity will fight, and they want the help of the benevolent vampires. The rest of the book will be the story of the battle against the hostile vampires.

"I am convinced that a lot of people are unconscious psychic vampires. They do drain you dry."

"I approached Van Vogt with this idea because he's been a friend of mine for about twenty years, and he is the author of some very good vampire stories – especially the famous one 'Asylum' which influenced me very much. Van is also interested in the superman idea, just as I am, and I'm sure he can contribute some very good ideas for the second part of the book, as we work out the battle between the malevolent vampires and the benevolent ones." ■

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FILM FANTASY DOCUMENTED

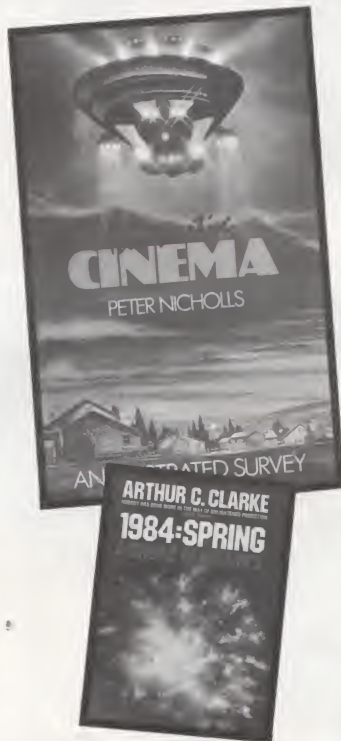
Cinema trends come and go; in the past there have been spates of everything from disco dancing to kung fu fighting, from cowboy capers (whatever happened to the anticipated revival of the traditional Western?) to vigilante violence. But since 1902 when film pioneer Georges Méliès made *A Trip to the Moon*, one genre has always been popular with a large proportion of the cinema-going public—fantasy. Whether it be science fiction, horror or surrealism, that which goes beyond the bounds of reality has captured the imagination of audiences since the dawn of cinema.

Fantasy in general has been the most documented of all genres. A recent book by Australian writer Peter Nicholls, called *Fantastic Cinema*, is one of the best to chronicle the history of screen SF/horror/fantasy. An illustrated survey of the subject, it is packed with interesting information and trivia, and attractively designed with lots of rare stills (many in colour, and all well reproduced).

Nicholls, being well versed in fantasy films and literature, defines his subject in an Introduction, and then goes on to cover "The First Fifty Years" followed by "The SF Boom" of the Fifties and after. As Kim Newman observed in his recent book, *Nightmare Movies*, the turning point for fantasy films was in 1968 with the release of 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *Night of the Living Dead* and *Planet of the Apes*, and Nicholls devotes a whole chapter to this "breakthrough" year. He gives biographies of twelve selected "Key Directors and Producers since 1968" such as Kubrick, Lucas, Spielberg, Cronenberg and De Palma (Monty Python is also included in this section), and then documents the contemporary cinema of SF, horror and fantasy. There is an enlightening "Chronology of 250 Key Fantastic Films" followed by a massive 50,000 word Filmography which alphabetically lists and comments upon 700 titles (featuring an amusing "squeamish rating" of one to three skulls for particularly gruesome films).

Fantastic Cinema is an intelligent discussion of fantasy films which comments upon social and political attitudes in relation to cinema trends. It is also a comprehensive reference book. As well as covering the recognised classics of the genre (*Metropolis*, *Bride of Frankenstein*, *Forbidden Planet*, *The Exorcist*, *Blade Runner*) in detail, Nicholls also looks at less familiar films and gives credit to such under-rated gems as *Vampire Circus*, *The Car* and *The Sword and the Sorcerer*. Written in a scholarly, but entertaining, style, the book makes some good observations on the politics and psychology of fantasy, mentioning the social classes of movie monsters, and the reasons we like horror films (with an interesting definition from SF novelist Gene Wolfe). There are significant comments about the "film-making-by-committee syndrome" and the media hysteria related to

Fantasy BOOKSHELF



the video nasty controversy.

An excellent book, with superb cover artwork by Bob Hall, *Fantastic Cinema* is a must for every fantasy film fan's bookshelf.

Another new book on the subject, in a similar style to Peter Nicholls' *Fantastic Cinema*, is *A Pictorial History of Science Fiction Films*. Competently written by David Shipman, the well known film historian (it says here), it is the latest in the series of "Pictorial History" film books (which includes Denis Gifford's *Horror Movies*) from publishers Hamlyn.

The press release for this book claims, "A *Pictorial History of Science Fiction Films* is the first large-scale book on the subject...". They obviously haven't read Nicholls'.

Fantastic Cinema or older publications by Jeff Rovin or Philip Strick. The press release goes on to say it is also "by far the most up-to-date". Considering it has just been published that is hardly surprising.

Anyway, publicity blurb gripes aside, the book is an intelligent history lesson on SF (or "sci-fi" as the author calls it) in the cinema. It contains a wealth of information, particularly on the early days of Méliès' first experiments and on German "Expressionism" and "Grotesque Cinema." Covering the first Universal monster movies (but not the sequels) and the SF explosion in the Fifties, it is a well researched reference book. Shipman looks at all the popular blockbusters from 2001: *A Space Odyssey* through to *Star Wars*, *Superman* and *E.T.*, and takes us up to *Krull*.

The book has some glaring factual errors, particularly in the later chapters, such as pictures identified incorrectly, Tom Baker referred to as the third *Doctor Who* and Ray Harryhausen credited as being responsible for the creation of the title creature in *Trog* (1970)! These mistakes would suggest that Shipman is less familiar with contemporary SF. He certainly seems to have more enthusiasm for older movies judging by his criticism of 'new wave' films such as *The Man Who Fell to Earth*.

A Pictorial History of Science Fiction Films is lavishly illustrated with lots of huge colour stills, and reproductions of many rare posters and lobbycards on excellent quality paper. It has a similar easy-to-read typographical design to *Fantastic Cinema*, but the front cover looks more like an astronomy textbook.

Although not as entertaining as Nicholls' publication, it is nevertheless an interesting and fact-filled history book, and is worth buying just for the splendid presentation of stunning pictures.

Ron Boyd

PATRONAGE WITHOUT EVOLUTION

Last year's main Hugo Award was voted to *Starline Rising* by David Brin, and I joined British fans' enthusiastic chorus of "Who?" This was Brin's second novel, sequel to his first: *Sundiver*.

Sundiver is "hard" SF, a traditional mix of high technology, alien machinations, bigger-than-cosmic questions, engagingly daft sociology, and characters with passable life and colour provided you don't approach them sideways on and notice they're only cardboard. All the ingredients for a nipping yarn, never not quite well cooked enough.

Brin applies Erich von Daniken's loopy theory (that people of yore were too stupid to have evolved into Erich von Daniken without help from superpowered aliens!) to a Galactic society based on Patronage. Patrons are those who have "uplifted" a lesser race into developing brains, civilization and underarm deodorants. Top of the social heap are races "descended" thus from the first Patrons who began it all. (Brin, like von Daniken, shirks the question of how they got started without a helping tentacle.) At the bottom are those who've never, er, Patronized a lesser species at all.

But guess what – humanity seems to have started without aid! And by the time of the book has gained galactic status by raising Earthly inferior to human intelligence: chimps, dolphins, gorillas and dogs. The plot gets moving with the rumour that magnetovores, energy creatures in the Sun's chromosphere, may be (a) intelligent, and (b) the missing Patrons which "explain" the rise of the human race ...

Ensuing trips into the Sun itself bring lots of complications, perhaps too many, with some nicely described hardware, three aliens (each with its own obscure motives), murder, psychosis, detection (complete with the hero gathering the suspects in the library), and a climax of slam-bang violence on a crippled ship falling into the Sun.

Unfortunately, parts are peculiarly paced and others barely believable. People act weirdly for reasons of plot. It's the sort of book in which a race – I won't say which – proves to have concealed unlikely, plot-saving super-powers from everyone. The happy ending seems an unconvincing afterthought; the massive central question (did humanity have Patrons?) remains unanswered.

Good fun for a first novel; must look at this second.

David Langford

CLARKE COMES CLEAN

One of the embarrassments of SF is that at core it's an intellectual sort of fiction – "a literature of ideas". No harm in that, except that a gripping story often isn't the best way to put across a logical argument.

You know how it goes: some character foolishly asks, "Gee, Professor, how does the quongo ray projector work, exactly?" and the action stops dead for three pages of indigestible lecturing, not counting the equations ...

All this is a roundabout way of saying it's sometimes good to see Clarke wipe off the



fictional greasepaint and argue with us in his very own voice. He's had plenty of practice – his non-fiction now outweighs his SF, and each of these 31 essays and speeches contains something interesting.

Mind you, the book achieves less than the sum of its parts. Some of the pieces are trivial. Some are repetitive: in speeches to various academics, scientists and UN conferences Clarke makes the same points, and tells the same anecdotes, again and again. This is because he reckons they're important – which they are – but couldn't a man who's so concerned about our future have spared the odd tree by editing out repetitions here?

Never mind. Here you'll find Clarke being sane, rational and compassionate as ever ... meaning that (since these adjectives are out of fashion), he's blazingly controversial. He wants science to be used to promote peace! His proposal for UN-sponsored spy satellites (so all of us, not just super-powers, can monitor the world) makes such sense that the superpowers vetoed it. His pining of cold water on America's ludicrous "star wars" defence project is rumoured to have so maddened Robert Heinlein that there was nearly a punch-up. He puts the boot into the even more alarming nonsense of "creation science" (whose fans insist the Bible is the definitive textbook on evolution). I was cheering all the way.

Other subjects include space, communications, SF, snorkeling, poetry and a weird 1947 correspondence with Bernard Shaw (who reckoned the sound barrier resembled a brick wall). Despite the trivia, the gems are well worth the price of admission.

David Langford

CRAFTWORKE

Oh, woe! Oh, accursed imaginings! Come ye unto this book of trans-cosmic terror. I fancy some goode old-fashioned horror here.

Modern writers could learn a thing or two from H. P. Lovecraft, who must have written some of the darkest horror stories ever, and his deep gothic tales of monstrous things sucking the very life out of you.

Anyone who's ever read one of his stories will need no introduction, though. *H. P. Lovecraft Omnibus 3 – The Hunter of the Dark* is an invaluable collection for fans of Lovecraft, containing a good selection of early stories, and some old favourites: *The Hunter of the Dark*, obviously, *The Thing on the Doorstep* and *Pictman's Model*, all of which will probably be familiar if you've ever been within three miles of a horror compilation.

For those who have never read Lovecraft, it's a good start, containing such wonderful sentences as "There was a sort of heavy dragging and a most detestably sticky noise as of some fiendish and unclean species of suction." Heady stuff! I wonder where all these revolting things have gone from today's horror stories?

The terror is largely unnamed, although when it is, it's usually some scary thing with huge tentacles resembling bits of insects. Just the sort of thing you'd want to take home for your mother to meet.

You won't enjoy this book if 1) you don't like subtlety, 2) you dislike Edgar Allan Poe, and 3) you like your reading short and to the point. He does have a tendency to go on a bit sometimes, as in *The Outsider*: "I recognised ... the unholy abomination that stood leering before me ..." I guess that's Gothic licence!

It makes ye want to swoon at the unutterable terror that stalks the dark nights in these potent tales. Methinketh ye should bear off this volume in tube pocket – having paid for it, of course!

Liz Milroy

RAMBLING CAMPBELL

Gray deaths, plenty of frights, suspense, action, good characterisation, exciting plot – just what the good horror novel needs. It's a shame that in Ramsey Campbell's *Incarnate* you've got to plough through chapters that are almost as frightening as an over-friendly puppy to find anything remotely scary.

About dreams, or one in particular to be more precise, and the nightmare it turns into, this book is rather like a dream itself – aimless and shapeless. Because there are five major characters, it is very difficult to keep track of who's doing what to whom, when, where and why. You keep feeling as if you've missed vital points, it's so confusing.

Molly, the heroine (as far as there is one), is the only character who can save Danny, Frada, Helen and Joyce from a fate worse than death, and other terrible clichés. Whether she'll realise this in time to save everyone is another matter.

The five, all of whom have some psychic power, take part in a "controlled" experiment into dreaming, run by Doctors Guilda Kent and Stuart Hay. The experiment, needless to say, goes wrong, and something horrendous, no doubt from hell, is unleashed.

Eleven years later, (and it feels like it), Stuart Hay decides to get in touch with the others again, but they want nothing to do with him – if ever they meet again and relive the dream they all shared, something bad will happen. And it does.

At nearly 500 pages, there's not enough action to justify the length, but just when you think you really must go and feed the goldfish, there's excitement (shock! horror!) in the form of several obligatory deaths. But this doesn't last long, and soon we're back to good old peace.

However, it does have its redeeming features. The descriptions of London streets are excellent, and the characters, particularly Danny, the sex-scared maniac, and Susan, the child, are sharply drawn.



But at the end, you feel cheated – even the minor but clever twist in the tale cannot make up for loss of interest in the fate of Molly and co. Perhaps Ramsay should be renamed Rambling Campbell, because, although reasonable on a B-movie level, this book just goes on ... and on ... and on ...

Liz Milroy

Fantastic Cinema – by Peter Nicholls (Ebury Press £6.95pb/£9.95hb)

A Pictorial History of Science Fiction Films – by David Shipman (Hamlyn £8.95pb)

1984: *Spring – A Choice of Futures* by Arthur C. Clarke (Granada £2.50)

Sundiver by David Brin (Bantam/Corgi £1.95)

The H.P. Lovecraft Omnibus 3: The Hunter of the Dark – by H.P. Lovecraft (Granada £2.95pb)

Incarnate – by Ramsey Campbell (Granada £2.50pb)

Johnatan Betuel, the screen-writer responsible for *The Last Starfighter*, makes his directorial debut with Touchstone Films' latest fantasy release, due out this October. The scholarly-sounding *My Science Project* in fact concerns the exploits of a high-school boy (John Stockwell from *Christine*) who has to turn in a science project to teacher Dennis Hopper (from *Easy Rider*) in order to graduate from High School. With the help of a couple of friends he decides to raid a nearby U.S. Air Force supply dump for inspiration. The gizmo he discovers and takes back to class turns out to be the key part of a flying saucer secretly dismantled back in the 1950s. When turned on, the device creates a time-space vortex within the school corridors. Before long Stockwell and Co. are fighting atomic mutants, ape men, aliens, knights in armour, Egyptian mummies and — (yes, John Brosnan) even a dinosaur.

Betuel is a shrewd director. Although *My Science Project* has a relatively low \$10.5 m dollar budget, his insurance policy has been to surround himself with an impressive crew to make sure that the film will be more than efficient in all the designated areas.

Producer Johnathan Taplin made *Mean Streets*, *Under Fire* and *Baby*. David Walsh, the cinematographer lit *Country*, and production designer David L. Snyder received an Oscar nomination for *Blade Runner*. In addition to special effects co-ordinator Michael Lantieri, whose credits include *Poltergeist* and *Blue Thunder*, Disney veteran Robert Schiffer heads the make-up effects, and the production will also benefit from contributions by designer Ron Cobb, ace prosthetics man Rick Baker, and Doug Beswick.

I had to recognise that if I wasn't ruthless with my own script, then another director would be.

**Johnathan Betuel,
Director/Screen-writer.**

One of Baker's major effects is distorting actor Dennis Hopper when he gets pulled and twisted in the time warp. This effect is being created along the lines of Baker's innovative work on *An American Werewolf in London*.

Screen-writer/Director Betuel is a New Yorker by birth. After graduating from law school he decided to join the high-powered Madison Avenue advertising agency J. Walter Thompson as a

My Science Project, the latest film from Disney's offshoot company Touchstone Films, concerns the unleashing of a space-time vortex by an ordinary high school kid. It is the directorial debut of The Last Starfighter's screen-writer Johnathan Betuel, who also wrote the script. Alan Jones recently spoke to director/writer Betuel, and designer Doug Beswick about the making of this "science-fiction allegory for our times."

copywriter, but he was fired for writing novels during the firm's slower periods. It didn't matter, as he was earning an income from the numerous paperback sales of his western and detective male-orientated adventure stories. It was his wife, Nancy, who persuaded him to try his hand at screen-writing and his first successful screen-play was *The Last Starfighter*.

What did he think about the finished result? "I thought it was a nice sci-fi fantasy", says the erudite and charming Betuel. "It worked as a fairytale with aliens. I really enjoyed it, but I think I'll wait a few years before viewing it more critically, as you can only get a true perspective on your work after a long period of time. It was tremendously important for me of course, as it was the first script of mine to see the light of day."

Betuel is also grateful to *Starfighter's* director Nick Castle, as he explains. "I spent all my time on the set and didn't take on any other assignments so I could watch and learn about directing. If you are aware of the pitfalls and have done your homework properly, any problem a major production throws up can be handled. Castle tolerated my presence on set and was very good to me, which is one of the reasons why I've made the shift to directing quite quickly. Although my success isn't overnight by any means, I have made the transition fast in standard Holly-

wood time. I believe in creating the right sort of atmosphere on set so that everyone is encouraged to contribute. I don't believe in the auteur theory at all, especially with an effects picture. A first time director like myself has to rely on all the other qualified personnel who have been down the road before."

Another facet that has helped him cope is the fact that he was a writer first. He comments, "You've got to know what the differences are between the page and the stage. The best writers are those who can fully envisage the problems the director faces on the studio floor in terms of what is happening around him. I can steer things in an editorial sense as opposed to a logistical and cinematic sense. If you are so married to the script, you can't see the wood for the trees. I had to recognise the fact that if I wasn't ruthless with my own script, then another director would be. You have to try and maintain that objectivity even though you know the script has gone through fourteen rewrites and it breaks your heart."

To get *My Science Project* of the ground, Betuel found that he was going into studios being as candid as he could about the problems they faced by giving him the chance of directing. He continues, "Basically I told them I would work eight days a week and keep my eyes open. I tried to convince them that I was entering the fray as realistically as possible."

Betuel admits that Disney was not his most obvious choice of studios initially, but the emergence of Touchstone Films changed his mind. "Touchstone had an enormous success with *Splash* and were making films like *Country*, and these were titles that showed, not necessarily

This (the dinosaur) is about the most fluid puppet ever built. It does everything.

**Doug Beswick,
Puppet Designer.**

a shift away from the good old heyday of Disney, but that they were recognising we had entered the Eighties".

One of the reasons why Betuel took the project to Disney was because other studios couldn't understand why he wanted a *Tyrannosaurus Rex* in the script in the first place. He explains, "I told my agent that I only wanted to go to a studio who could understand the basic premise of *My Science Project*. The

MY SCIENCE PROJECT



T-Rex breathes his last in the
museum. Below: Specs on for the
science lesson. Right and below: Some
of the young heads of My Science
Project.





Above top: Activity in the school at night. Below: Two of the stars looking as if being young isn't that much fun. Below: Night-school for the dedicated.

idea of anything coming through the walls was important to the basic thrust of the plot. The T. Rex was the meanest concept of what that could be. If studio executives didn't understand that, I always backed away. You learn how to spot trouble in this business!"

The dinosaur itself is a half-million dollar rod and cable puppet built by Doug Beswick to match the full-sized T. Rex used earlier in the main shooting, where it threatens the school kids in the gym. At a height of only 2½ feet, the dinosaur has a 40 point movement as Beswick explains. "This is about the most fluid puppet ever built. It does everything. We built it to last through the production, but as it is a prototype of sorts we had no idea of how long it was going to last before it broke down, which thankfully hasn't happened. There are thirty-six cables on the puppet which are condensed into a very small area so it had to be built to be strong yet lightweight." The fact that it was lightweight meant that the puppet had difficulty looking heavy as it walked, according to Beswick who explains how the 1/8th scale model is operated.

"Altogether there are seven people who work the model. One person carries the whole weight of the creature and can make it lean from side to side due to a pole stuck in its hindquarters. Another person operates the legs with rods and has thumb controls to bend the toes. We actually painted moss and mud onto the side of the model's legs in order to disguise the mechanics here. A third person is on the tail — a joystick control means we can achieve a really effective 'S' curve motion. The fourth man bends the back from left to right and blinks the eyes. Another is on the arms which can bend at the shoulders, elbows and fingers. One works the head and controls all the obvious lizard like movements. He also controls the neck and opens and closes the mouth. And the last moves the tongue. We had to create a seventh person for that job as it was much harder to do than we anticipated."

Beswick, who will carry the credit of "Dinosaur built and animated by" on the finished film, says there have been few problems with the model itself. He continues, "Only cables have malfunctioned, but they are easy to repair. The best thing about doing this at Disney is that we are on the split level stage where they filmed the laboratory sequences for *Splash*. As the stage is sunken it means it's more accessible to the crew as they aren't perched on scaffolding."

Betuel got the basic idea for *My Science Project* from his brother as he

explains. "In our youth we used to go out collecting junk and storing it in our garage. I'd forgotten about that until he reminded me about it, so, during the spare time on *Starfighter*, I jotted down an outline on a clipboard. When *Starfighter* finished, I knew I was on the right track and it just kept on germinating. It eventually became so real to me that I was compelled to put it all down on paper. I'm glad I'm married actually, as I don't think I would ever come down to Earth properly otherwise!"

In My Science Project I wanted a kid who wasn't a computer whiz or a spoilt brat with the world at his finger tips.

**Johnathan Betuel,
Director/Screen-writer.**

Apart from the two leads already mentioned, *My Science Project* also stars Danielle von Zerneck, Fisher Stevens and Raphael Sbarge. Betuel says they have been a very understanding cast. "It wasn't a case of them wondering what down was calling himself the director this week. It's an oversimplification, but an actor works in very much the same way as a writer does. Internally from the point of view of motivation. I have been blessed with actors who have responded to my theory that writing the script and telling them about it are much the same thing. Pre-production wins 90% of the battle for you I think. If your decisions are sound in that phase and the storyboarding is concise, you've got the whole picture in your head before you even hit the floor. You can anticipate the pitfalls before they happen."

It doesn't worry Betuel that he is up against similar films due to be released at the same time. As he says, "It could drive you crazy and is such a waste of time. All the money in the world can't help a picture if the story doesn't have a basic reality, humour or something to feel for. Science-fiction is a nice allegory for our times. It's like the Western in the Sixties. But most writers these days are taking the average kid and pitting him against aliens, flying saucers, pirates and experiments which are the basic theme of our competition. In *My Science Project* I wanted to take a kid who wasn't a computer whiz or a spoilt brat with the world at his finger-tips. I wanted him to have nothing, be relatively poor and ready to be shown that there were other things in this world apart from his treasured car. That's the basic theme behind the film. Look differently at the horizon and you may discover something you didn't know existed." ♦



Above top: Dinosaur authority William Scheele sculpts a replica of a Tyrannosaurus Rex for the film. Centre left: Veteran make up man Bob Schiffer at work, and right: The Old Stretchy head mask worn by Dennis Hopper. Below: Doug Beswick with a rod puppet.



EARTH **V** THE ALIENS



V is back – and the emphasis is very much more earthbound. Richard Marson

takes a look at the television series sequel to the mini-series, and discovers that the dictates of audience ratings and a lower budget have considerably changed the style. Will the SF soap opera format go down well with audiences on this side of the Atlantic?

Hype characterises American television, and the launch of a weekly series of *V* was no exception. Trailers, press releases and merchandise were all brought into the battle when the programme was launched onto a very expectant audience last October. As the hype died down and the series was left to live or die on its own merits, it soon became clear that the American public weren't buying the idea, and before very long the show was fighting for survival. Finally, after completion of the first season in March, the network decided to cancel the programme, and *V* disappeared into syndication.

The failure of *V* was bound up in two basic flaws – creative and production defects, and the more fundamental strictures of the Nielson ratings system. To take the latter first, *V* owes its existence and its cancellation to the vagaries of American broadcasting. With the main television channels controlled by three giant companies, ABC, NBC and CBS, and with the battle for audiences of prime importance to programme officials, series taken up by the individual networks are only allowed to survive if they achieve a respectable rating, and thus garner a profitable slab of advertising revenue. 'It doesn't matter how good a series might be, only how many people watch it. Which is why the British, free from the commercial restraints so prevalent in the States, can afford to be so condescending about the likes of such imported fare as *Dynasty* and *Charlie's Angels*. *V* died once it became obvious that its ratings weren't justifying advertiser's interest, and the final move of scheduling the show directly against *Dallas* sounded its death knell once and for all.

V started life as two hugely successful mini-series, both of which have already been screened here, and it was as a direct result of their success the NBC, the network which produced *V*, asked for a feasibility report on the possibility



Left: top: *Resistance* fighters Mike Donovan (Marc Singer) and Martin (Frank Ashmore), and below: Elias (Michael Wright), Caleb (Jason Bernard), Martin and Julie (Faye Grant). Above: Alien villainesses Lydie (June Chadwick) and Diana (Jane Badler).

of turning the two mini-series into a weekly one-hour version. This is another characteristic of American television – the creation of a programme through audience research and samples of typical audiences watching 'pilot' shows before saying what they did and didn't like about the project. The information gathered by this research process is then used to formulate a series that will have the right ingredients to make it a hit. Every famous American science-fiction series has suffered from this viewer interference, from *Star Trek* through to *Battlestar Galactica*, and they have all experienced premature deaths from having their original concepts tampered with to such a degree that the viewer can no longer recognise the

series they started to watch weeks before. *V* was sadly to be no exception.

Filming the series was arduous, uncomfortable and time consuming for everyone in front of and behind the cameras. Each episode had a filming schedule that was as punishing as was possible, with the required forty-five minutes of action being churned out every seven days. Some of the cast took to sleeping on set and found themselves working an eighteen-hour day. Because of the science-fiction format of the series, time had to be spent on special effects and it wasn't long before regulars like Jane Badler as the evil Diana were being replaced in long shots by doubles. The result, artistically, was pretty much hit and miss. Direction soon began to

resemble the static close-ups and long shots of every American soap opera. Writers were instructed to minimise all the more complicated requirements of special effects and pyrotechnics where possible stock footage was to be utilised, particularly in any battle or crowd scenes. This naturally became a routine process and the use of the same exterior shots week in, week out certainly didn't help matters.

SF SOAP OPERA

To fill the gap caused by the problem of the seven-day turnaround, there was only one realistic alternative – to have more scenes concerning the family situations of the humans and the internal dissents of the alien visitors. Kenneth Johnson's astute predictions of plot limitations becoming apparent, and characterisation taking over from visuals were soon to come true. The series hovered closer and closer towards SF soap opera, and the situations, particularly as human raids on Visitors followed by the Visitors' counter attacks on the humans became increasingly, if necessarily, repetitive. One of the programme's team of writers explained the difficulties and drawbacks inherent in the writing of *V*.

"It's not easy, believe me. All the time we're being told 'No, no, we don't have the time to do that. Think of something else. Put in some more talk here, because at least we can shoot that.' So it's inevitable that the show's going to lose impact as we go on. It's just a hazard of TV production that is made far worse in *V*'s case because it is science-fiction and not ordinary drama. Often you'll think up some great set piece for an episode, and they won't even think about trying it. I'm not blaming the directors – they've got their job to do, and in the schedule we're working on, the broadcast episodes are rapidly catching up with the ones still being made so the time pressure is getting worse not better. It's just that, for us, we are being accused of copping out and not showing the kind of stuff that people originally tuned into *V* to see, and yet there's really nothing we can do about it."

EARTHLY DILEMMAS

The creator and first writer of the show was Kenneth Johnson, perhaps best known for launching the television exploits of *The Incredible Hulk*. His advice to the network was that a weekly *V* series just wasn't feasible, bearing in mind both its heavy reliance on complicated special effects and the basic limitations of the 'invasion of Earth' plotline. He was unhappy that his idea might develop into just another space opera, with the producers being forced to abandon the sheer spectacle of the

initial series for the easier to shoot dilemmas of the Earth and Visitor characters. His reservations were backed up by most of the production team who had worked on the spectacular mini-series. However, audience research proved positive, and the demands of the customer more than equalled the doubts of the writing and producing partnership. NBC, traditionally the weakest of the big three networks, wasn't interested in forecasts of failure, and was only concerned with the possibility of having a hit series for its autumn schedules. Kenneth Johnson disassociated himself with the whole set-up and left for pastures new, while NBC simply found new production people to replace those



V hero Marc Singer clasps Faye Grant protectively.

unwilling to work with their latest 'baby'.

NBC decided they would place an order for an initial twenty-two episodes, with the possibility of more if the hoped for success *did* materialise. Most of the cast featured in the original mini-series, readily agreed to appear in the weekly version, partly because some of them had found themselves out of work after the exposure of being in the first series, and rather more because of the excellent money paid in TV in the States. Those that either couldn't or wouldn't because of other commitments were written out in the first episode of the new series. With these problems overcome, production on the programme finally began.

As the show found itself out of the top twenty ratings, a panic began. The producers once again commissioned an audience survey which came up with the conclusion that some of the most popular scenes were where the visitors ate whole rodents! Consequently, more scenes of that nature were added to the forthcoming episodes. Unfortunately, cosmetic surgery like this didn't work. Other additions to the series, on a rather more successful note, included the regular cameo appearances of top fantasy actress Sybil Danning in the role of Diana's equally evil and ruthless scientific assistant. Seen on screen for no more than one scene a week, it was her job to experiment on young human beings before having them packaged and stored as a later source of food.

Also added was the use of a phoney news broadcast at the start of each episode to indicate, *War of the Worlds*-style, the progress of the aliens' infiltration of Earth. However, producers and network realised they were fighting a losing battle with the ratings, and when these superficial changes failed to produce any dramatic increase in the audience figures being netted by the show, it became a matter of time before the expected cancellation was finally announced in May. There was some speculation that the series might win a slot on what is called first run syndication, where shows are still in production, but go straight to screenings on the small local TV stations rather than onto the big nationwide networks first. In *V*'s case, however, the very nature of the show was against it, particularly since first run syndication requires international backing as a rule, as well as a lower budget than that on which *V* was operating. The fact was that the series had failed to establish itself abroad in time to save it for resumed production this summer. So far only *Fame* and a few comedy series have managed to win such a lucky reprieve.

V failed because its expectations couldn't hope to equal its resources. Its conditions of production were typical of most American television, and were symptomatic of why so little of their TV SF comes off.

The competition in American broadcasting is much tougher than in England, where *V* would never have as good a budget, but would be made on a smaller scale, with the distinct possibility of running for several series. In the initial publicity for the *V* mini-series, the network and producers of the show proudly stated that *V* was too big a production to become a weekly series. Sadly for them, they were right.

V will be screened by the ITV companies over the next year, split into two series.

I'm going to shock regular readers of this column by revealing that the vast pay cheques I get from Starburst for entertaining you in this monthly fashion are not enough to support me in the manner to which I have become accustomed. In order to keep up the payments on my Porsche and the dry-dock fees for my submersible in the Bahamas, I am obliged to take on other assignments. Some of this extra work, I fear, has not been the sort of thing one wants people to know about, but I've decided to come clean on this occasion and make an earth-shattering admission...

I write *Dempsey and Makepeace* novelizations. Or rather I *did* write them. Yes folks, books 2 and 3 in the *Dempsey and Makepeace* series of novelizations were actually written by me, even though the covers reads 'John Raymond' (Raymond is my middle name; subtle, huh?).

I've never written a novelization before, and when I was approached by the publisher to do these, I asked a writer friend of mine, who'd written several, how you went about the job. His answer was that you got two scripts and joined them together. I naturally asked how you could make one book out of two separate scripts. "Simple," he said. "When you get to the end of the first script you then write 'One week later...' and start on the second script."

I wasn't too impressed with this advice. Surely, I thought, it was possible to convert just one script into a novel. But then I saw the scripts themselves and quickly realized that despite the apparent bulk there isn't really much substance in a 50-minute TV script. Even with a lot of padding, you'd only be able to spin one out to a very small book indeed—say 80 pages. So I was obliged to make use of the two-script method after all, although I hope my 'joins' read more ingeniously than just 'One week later...'

Now when I was writing these books, they were still shooting the *Dempsey &*

It's only a MOVIE

A Column by John Brosnan



Dempsey and Makepeace stars, Glynis Barber and Michael Brandon.

Makepeace series and I hadn't seen any episodes, but I'd been told it was going to be a tough action series. And judging from the high body count in the scripts I presumed it would not be aimed at the *Blue Peter* audience. So I felt at liberty to, let's say, *toughen* up the books a little and add a little spice to them. For example, I gave Dempsey a private life. I thought he deserved one considering the way he was treated by *Makepeace* in the scripts. Also I made the violence a little more explicit—in one book I had *Makepeace* shoot a rapist in the groin, for instance, but it was all done in the best possible taste.

Overall I was fairly happy with the two books and felt I'd done the best I could under the circumstances (I had less than a month to write each one). Then the series finally started on TV. If you've seen a *Dempsey & Makepeace* episode you don't need any comment from me—but it did well in the ratings, and on that level

can be considered a success.

Then the books came out and the trouble started. It seemed that a large part of the big *Dempsey & Makepeace* audience were in the '12-or-under' age-group (rumour has it that it really goes down big with five-year olds) and of course many of the little dears went and bought the books. No problem with that, you say? No, but then their parents read the books as well and that's when the complaints started arriving at LWT. *Not many* complaints, I hasten to add.

The upshot of it all is that when the books are reprinted they'll have a 'Not Suitable for Children' sticker on the covers, and that my involvement with *Dempsey & Makepeace*, tenuous as it was, is definitely kaput.

And I didn't even get to meet Glynis Barber...

QUEEN OF THE CORN

Speaking of beautiful blondes, *Sheena—Queen of the Jungle* is worth a visit

despite the bad things you may have read about it. Of course, you may have trouble tracking it down now. It came and went in London so fast it was hardly worth taking the print out of the film can, but I'm sure there's a version available on video (no doubt suitably trimmed by our shiny new band of video censors).

It's a silly movie but an entertaining one. I've heard it cost around \$30,000,000 to make, and I can believe it. Every beautifully photographed frame yells 'big money' from the screen, and the fact that it bombed at the box office in the States, as well as here, makes it one of the more expensive cinema duds of recent years.

I'm not sure why it was such a flop with audiences. Maybe the script had something to do with it. It was the usual blend of knowing corn and nudging high-camp humour from a group of writers who have cornered the market on writing scripts based on comic book characters; David and Leslie Newman (*Superman*) and Lorenzo Semple Jr. (*Batman*, *Flash Gordon*). Perhaps that approach has gone out of fashion these days; young audiences want their superheroes presented straight (like Indiana Jones).

Tanya Roberts certainly plays *Sheena* straight. Or rather she wears a very serious expression throughout the film, which may mean that's the entire range of her acting abilities. But in a role like *Sheena* being able to act is less important than being able to look good while climbing a tree dressed in a leather bikini.

Apart from watching Tanya Roberts climb trees, vines, cliffs and so on, the other big pleasure for me in the movie was the 'attack of the pink flamingoes' sequence. This occurs when *Sheena* telepathically summons a flock of flamingoes to save her from being chucked out of a helicopter. The sight of the helicopter pilot and the villainess being attacked by a horde of obviously hand-held stuffed flamingoes will stay with me for a very long time.

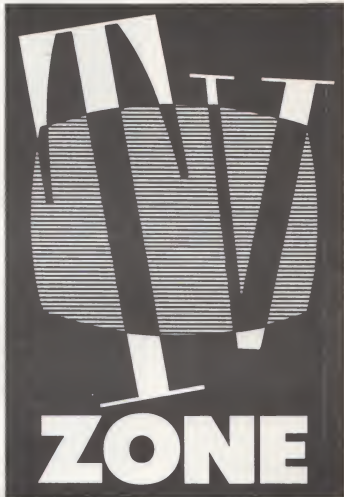
Vis back, and although the rumours of its cancellation at the end of the season now seem to be fact, not fiction, it's still a great deal of fun. Of course, it's also very silly and therein lies most of its appeal. All our favourite regulars from the mini-series (shown on British television last year as a successful alternative to the *Olympic Games*), are back. Jane Badler as Diana, the ruthless female leader of the *Visitors*, Faye Grant as Earth scientist Juliet Parrish, Marc Singer as the athletic freedom fighter, Mike Donovan, and Michael Ironside as Ham—a soldier of fortune who joined the resistance movement against the aliens, but insisted on doing things his own way.

Unlike most television series based on feature length pilots, episode one of *V* starts at exactly the spot where the mini-series left off. After destroying the aliens (the evil Diana having escaped in her shuttle craft à la Darth Vader), Donovan and his triumphant group of resistance fighters return to Earth in the *Visitors* captured spacecraft. *En route* are one or two friendly aliens, who help them in their fight against Diana and her minions, but who are at the same time remain in the background, while each episode focuses on the amazing exploits and 'one man army' stunts of Marc Singer and Michael Ironside.

V was an instant success in America because its soap opera format wedded conveniently with some excellent special effects. The series has some new effects work, but most of the space shuttle sequences are 'borrowed' from the mini-series. Of these highly detailed model shots, the original co-producer for *V*, Dan Blatt said, "Our matte/optical supervisor Richard Bennett is responsible for several spectacular sequences... It's all done by a process in which photographed images are blended with paintings on the final film".

VILE BODIES

In the mini-series, the make-up was just as important, with scenes involving aliens having their human faces torn off,



by Richard Holliss

revealing fork-tongued reptile heads beneath. This was an uncomfortable process that took up to three hours to apply to the actors faces, and required a medical attendant on duty because of the dangerous contact lenses involved.

Willie (Robert Englund), one of the *Visitors* who befriends the Earth people, doesn't get much of an opportunity to show his Mr Hyde persona in the television series and plays the part of a friendly alien not unlike Robin Williams' Mork, in the comedy show *Mork and Mindy*. Still, at least his character isn't as obnoxious as Robin (Blair Tefkin), the young girl who was seduced by one of the *Visitors*, and is now the Mother of a superior alien being, who seems to be a distant relative of the Jedi knights. The only other character in the show who is excruciatingly nasty is Nathan Bates, played by Lane Smith. Otherwise the heroes of *V* are quite a likeable bunch, and it's enjoyable watching them battle it out with the marvellously wicked Diana.

As you are no doubt aware, the aliens return to Earth from a secret base behind the moon, and set about decimating the cities of the World. (Even Los Angeles suffers thanks to stock footage from *The War of the Worlds*.) Diana has, however, been arrested for crimes against humanity, 'World Genocide' is one of the many criticisms levelled against her. Unfortunately, the crowds assembling to jeer at her at the beginning of her trial, amounted to some 60 or 70 people! Didn't the rest of humanity even care what happened to her?

Needless to say she escapes imprisonment and it's not

long before Donovan and Ham are hot on the trail. Marc Singer is superb, he never changes his outfit, and leaps around like a modern day Tarzan. In one outrageous sequence he actually catapults (it *may* have been a stunt man) through the open passenger window of a moving car. Head first! Surely his nose would have ended up pressed hard against the gear stick. But no, next thing we see, he's hooked onto the car body shooting at his pursuers. He even spends his time as a film cameraman when not saving the Earth from destruction.

Meanwhile back at the plot, Robin's child has kicked some lethal looking snakes out of a cave and proceeds to grow up (overnight) into a beautiful woman. This is useful because Diana is totally unaware of this fact and spends the majority of her time trying to find a little girl. Her search proves futile, but it does give plenty of opportunity for her to bitch with her lip gloss assistant in true Joan Collins style.

During these Earth shattering events, Donovan, Juliet, Ham and Robert (Michael Durrell), successfully capture an alien spaceship of gigantic 'mile-wide' proportions single-handedly! But that's what makes *V* so entertaining. It's incredibly tongue-in-cheek, and yet its characters take the whole thing very seriously. It's repetitious of course. One week Diana will kidnap someone, forcing Donovan to come to the rescue, and the next week the Earth people capture Diana, who always manages to escape by the end of the story. Fortunately this rivalry between Diana and Donovan is a thousand times better than a similar situation that occurred regularly on *Blake's 7* between arch enemies Servan and Avon.

The only major criticism to level at *V*, is that the series is cheaper-looking than the mini-series. Even the aliens use their laser weapons more sparingly, thus creating less work for the optical department, and Diana irritatingly chooses to travel around the countryside in conventional Earth bound transport like cars, when it would be far more exciting if she used her alien shuttle craft. But for all that *V* is compelling viewing. It's also great entertainment and at the moment there's very little of that in the field of fantasy television.

RE-VAMPED FRANKENSTEIN

On a totally different note, Channel 4 have announced a series of classic Universal films for screening next year. These will include, amongst others, *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. It's all part of Channel 4's policy to introduce the idea of film seasons to Independent Television (always a popular format on the BBC).



Top: Larry Hagman and Barbara Eden in *I Dream of Jeannie*, and below: Elsa Lanchester in *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935).

It could also be said that it's a good excuse for a series of repeats, but I still believe that television's greatest value lies in its ability to screen classic films long neglected by the contemporary cinema. Besides, rumours abound that a never before seen 20 second sequence has been restored in the *Frankenstein* print, thus increasing the value of another television showing. Apart from the Universal season, Channel 4 have bought the third and fourth series of *The Twilight Zone*. This will certainly please the numerous fans of the series who needed a computer to keep track of the BBC's irregular scheduling of the first *Twilight Zone* season. If anybody out there managed to successfully record the entire run on videotape – congratulations.

NEW AND OLD REPEATS

With the interest in old television programmes being rekindled among a majority of viewers, the number of repeats is steadily growing. It is becoming quite apparent that the TV companies see this as a lucrative deal. In the pipe-line are Sixties shows such as *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965-1970), starring Larry Hagman in pre-Dallas days, *Captain Scarlet* (1967) which is already on some ITV regions, *Mission Impossible* (1966-1973), and, as I have already mentioned, *The Twilight Zone* series 3 and 4. (The BBC still have the rights to season 2, but can't make up their minds about the screenings). The *Sky Cable* channel, available in some areas around the country, even brings to life old favourites such as *The Untouchables* (1959-1963), starring Robert Stack, and *Mr. ED* (1961), an amazing situation comedy series featuring Alan Young and a talking horse. Each week the four legged Ed battles his wits with a host of famous guest stars including, in a recent episode, an extremely youthful Clint Eastwood.

But that's not all, there are still plenty of vintage television shows to look forward to. For the fantasy buff these include such titles as *The Name of the Game* (1968-1971), starring Gene Barry fresh from his success in *Burke's Law*, *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (1970), starring Hope Lange, *The Time Tunnel* (1968), with Robert Colbert and James Darren, *Tarzan* (1969), starring Ron Ely, *My Favourite Martian*, starring Ray Walston and Bill Bixby (1963-1966), *The Nightstalker* featuring ghost hunter extraordinaire Darren McGavin (1974-1975), and a British series long overdue for repeats, *The Persuaders* (1971), starring Roger Moore and Tony Curtis.

VIDEO VIEW

Reviews by Barry Forshaw

Out from Warners, we have Philippa Mora's *The Beast Within*. And, as promised by the director, something more is attempted than just standard monster-on-the-rampage mayhem. Paul Clement plays a young man suffering under a parental legacy that is gradually turning him into a blood-lusting savage, and early attacks (in which physical changes are minimal) are succeeded by a spectacular series of flesh-bursting transformations. These climax in an astonishing hospital sequence that recaptures the make-up wonders of *The Howling* and *An American Werewolf In London*.

When I tell you that the make-up effects are engineered by Tom Burman, you'll realise that they are worth the price of your rental fee. But Mora and his actors (who include the excellent Ronny Cox as the hero's father) successfully convey the human side of the central character's plight. His efforts not to destroy his new-found girlfriend uphold the dimension of concern for his ebbing humanity.

Of course, *The Beast Within* suffers from some flaws – not least that bugbear of many otherwise serviceable horror films – the "catch-as-catch-can" script. Here, it's markedly unclear as to why Clements is undergoing his hideous transformation – and several characters are sorely underwritten.

Still, Mora and associates rise above this to create a tense, atmospheric piece, and Les Baxter's score (reminiscent of his Corman/Poe work) is a distinct asset, particularly

in this technically superior stereo video. Why haven't you bought that stereo VCR yet? Still wasting money on non-essentials like food and clothing?

MORE FROM WARNERS

Actually, *The Beast Within* is part of a bumper bundle from Warners that seems designed for Starburst readers, with a feast of horror and fantasy titles. It's particularly pleasing to be able to welcome to video Larry Cohen's sequel to the excellent *It's Alive*. *It Lives Again* features three monstrous babies who continue the grisly work instigated by the homicidal infant of the first film.

Of course, more than many successful genre directors, Cohen has always been concerned to underpin his horrors with sympathetic characterisation and intelligent, well-constructed storylines. Here John P. Ryan brilliantly reprises his role as the unlucky father of the first mutant baby, and is responsible for the mayhem wrought by the similarly lethal child of a young couple he befriends (skillfully played by Frederic Forest and Kathleen Lloyd). If the terror here seems less jolting than the first film, that's due to the familiarity of the material. But Rick Baker's fiendish creations and the posthumous re-use of Bernard Herrmann's unsettling score for the film remain positive assets.

Val Guest's *When Dinosaurs Ruled The Earth* features some excellent Jim Danforth stop-motion animation in a replay of their earlier hit, *One Million Years B.C.* It's particularly

intriguing to compare Warners' issue of Hammer's last two *Dracula* movies, the modern day incarnations *Dracula AD 1972* and *The Satanic Rites Of Dracula*. Both produced by the same team (Lee and Cushing star, of course), screenplays are by Don Houghton and direction by Alan Gibson. The later film (*Satanic Rites*) is much more successful at finding a contemporary framework for Dracula's evil. In *AD 1972*, Lee is virtually a bit player, confined to a deconsecrated church in modern London, while some trendy teenagers (who were dated even when the film was first issued) half-heartedly act as his agents. But in *Satanic Rites*, the brilliant idea of having Dracula pose as a mysterious property speculator (the latter-day equivalent of a vampire?) is matched by his splendidly apocalyptic mission – the end of all life on Earth, and, ultimately, his own.

To finish Warners' Hammer package, Terence Fisher's intelligent *Hound Of The Baskervilles* has Peter Cushing and Andre Morell as an excellent Holmes and Watson.

IT'S ALL TRUE

I mentioned recently (while review-

ing *Star Trek III*) that certain films are almost review-proof. Starburst readers will no doubt read reviews of a film like this, but see it whether Alan Jones announces it as the Second Coming, John Brosnan consigns it to purgatorial fires, or I fence-sit. So it's nice to be able to point you all to a little gem you're quite likely to have missed (although I have to confess that it was that knowledgeable film sage Ernest Harris who put me on to it).

This is a movie called *Lies* (Alpha), written and directed by Ken and Jim Wheat, and starring Ann Dusenberry and Bruce Davison. As it would be ruinous to detail the elaborate plot, I'll simply say that it's somewhat in the *Diaboliques* vein – a taut and intelligent thriller with a heart-stopping final reel.

PRECISION POTPOURRI

As promised in last month's Starburst, it's time for another company overview – this month it's the turn of Precision Video.

Where better to start than with *The Prisoner*? Precision has issued four of the most striking episodes of this



Above: Gerry Anderson's *Space 1999*. Below: Fritz Weaver is confronted by a creepy in *Tales From The Darkside*.





Tanya Roberts, queen of the jungle in *Sheena*.

greatest of TV science-fiction series, and from the magnetic *The Arrival* onwards, one marvels anew that something as intelligent and challenging as Patrick McGooohan's cult classic was ever made, let alone transmitted.

While still with TV fantasy, Precision has a splendid array of the Gerry Anderson series *Thunderbirds* to *Joe 90* – and even Anderson's live-action *Space 1999* is represented. Peter Hyams' taut *Capricorn One* is a jewel in the company's crown, but Stanley Donen's disappointing *Saturn 3* is less of an asset.

The two Osorio *Blind Dead* movies I've covered in earlier *Starbursts*, as well as Wes Craven's *Invitation To Hell*, so let's move on to Ira Levin's *The Boys From Brazil*, which satisfies with the usual glittering and outrageous logic of all Levin's bizarre plots.

The Possession of Joel Delaney is an ambitious and chilling occult thriller with Shirley MacLaine menaced by possessed brother Perry King, but over *The Monster Club* we'll draw the swiftest of veils!

Precision also has several useful anthologies from the first *Hammer House of Horror* series (infinitely preferable to the second season), and Dick Richard's loving reconstruction

of Forties film noir in *Farewell My Lovely* with Robert Mitchum as a splendid (if elderly) Philip Marlowe.

Jorge Grau, of the excellent *Living Dead At Manchester Morgue* is second unit director on Guido Malatesta's muscleman epic *Goliath Against The Giants*, and Patrick McGooohan features again as a taciturn hit-man in *The Hard Way*, directed by Michael Dryhurst. Of course, the company has its share of flops (such as the indifferent *Battle Of The Stars*), but the choicer items far outweigh these. Precision also has Bergman's *From The Life Of The Marionettes*, which would have our self-styled censors at the ready if they thought they could ban a great director as easily as they can the average horror film.

THE FUTURE IS THE PAST

Walter Hill continues to be one of the most unmissable directors working in genre movies today. From the stunning comic strip savagery of *The Warriors* to the Siegel-esque power of *48 Hrs*, Hill's reinvention of standard cinematic fare continues to delight.

With *Streets Of Fire* (CIC), Hill

moves into futuristic fantasy – although the gang-war devastated city streets his hero (Michael Pare) battles through are more reminiscent of the Fifties. And the insistent rock score suggests our era rather than some future time. This movie is an unabashed run-through of some well-loved action movie clichés (the last being Hill's word for *Streets*, not mine!), and he invests it all with his customary punch, not the least in the riotous opening of the film. The kidnapping of a rock star by a brutal motor-bike gang is handled with all of Hill's gut-crunching skill (and the use of sound – particularly on the stereo cassette – adds not a little to the impact).

To say that the characters never come to life beyond their comic strip parameters is hardly an appropriate objection, but Amy Madigan's tough female side-kick is so sharply etched that one could wish a little more attention had been paid to the relationships (after all, Howard Hawks' *Rio Bravo*, which Hill clearly admires, concentrates far more time on character interaction than the rough stuff). Still, if not up to his earlier movies, *Streets Of Fire* will keep Walter Hill fans happy.

SAVINI SOUFFLÉ

Embassy have issued nine episodes of George Romero's *Tales From The Darkside* on three cassettes, of which Tom Savini's *Inside The Closet* is said to be the "hit" (he directed and created the monster). At the time of writing I haven't seen this series, but will report as soon as possible.

NEW AND FORTHCOMING

MG/MUA have the stunning poem of violence *Utu*. From Guild, Lou Ferrigno's pulsing pectorals replace those of Steve Reeves as *Hercules*, directed by Luigi Cozzi (a.k.a. Lewis Coates). Guild also has the much acclaimed supernatural epic, *Ninja III – The Domination*. Thorn EMI leads with Steve Martin's comedy fantasy *All Of Me*, the TV adaptation of John Wyndham's *Chocky* and a budget price reissue of *Halloween II*.

Warners leads strongly with Clint Eastwood's *Tightrope* (and a low-price reissue in stereo of *Blade Runner*), while RCA has *Sheena*, with Tanya Roberts as a female Tarzan; Entertainment In Video promises *Ghoules*.

BRIEF NOTICES

CIC continue their admirable Hitchcock series with his black comedy *The Trouble With Harry*, one of

Hitch's own favourite films. The problem with this one, however, is what's happened since the Fifties. The macabre humour of Joe Orton, Joseph Heller and others now makes *Harry* seem rather quaint. Still, completists shouldn't miss this – not least for the stunning autumnal photography and a witty Bernard Herrmann score.

Splash (Touchstone/Disney), Ron Howard's delightful fantasy, has Daryl Hannah as a very fetching mermaid. Tom Hanks is excellent as her bemused human lover, and every comic variation of the theme is satisfyingly touched upon. Unlike the earlier Glynis Johns film *Miranda*, Ron Howard's film can deal with all the difficulties relating to sexual relationships with mermaids (although it seemed they were possible in the British film – despite Glynis Johns, unlike Daryl Hannah, never losing her tail!).

The video issue by Embassy of the much acclaimed Dutch film *The Fourth Man* is proof that some movies continue to resist classification. If I tell you that this is a bisexual religious art film-cum-horror fantasy nightmare, that's only a weak attempt to give you some kind of road map to Paul Verhoeven's fascinating film. The central character (Jeroen Krabbé), a bisexual writer, meets an enigmatic young woman at a literary discussion and returns to her neon-lit hotel (itself one of the striking visual motifs of the film). There a terrifying dream-like series of events carries him into battling terror. Don't rent this if you prefer straightforward, linear narratives. But, if you're the more adventurous sort, don't miss it.





The Filing Cabinet of DR. SALLY GARY

Where does the time go? Just as I'm finishing off one column, it's time for another. A mixed bag this month, but as always, alert *Starburst* readers never fail to find fault with what I write in Data Bank. So, first up...

CORRECTION TIME

Richard Dalby of Scarborough and Douglas McNaughton of Alyth, Teeside, both dropped me letters to point out that I was hasty in telling Ruth Montgomery in *SB 79 Data Bank*, that the 1959 movie *Night of the Demon* has never been remade.

Both pointed out that ITV screened a TV version of *Casting the Runes* (the M.R. James short story on which *Demon* was based) in 1977.

Now, come on, fellas. Not fair dragging in TV versions. I'll admit I didn't know about the 1979 version, but if I'd thought TV plays counted as remakes, I would have mentioned the version transmitted during the Sixties (also by ITV) which was a virtual remake of the film, except that the hero managed to pass the runes back to Karswell in a newspaper at a kiosk in the station. But we're all being picky. *Night of the Demon* hasn't been remade as a movie. There is a movie available on video under that title, but it has nothing to do with runes, cast or otherwise!

I KNOW THE FACE...

Still with Richard Dalby, he writes. "No magazine, not even *Starburst*, has ever carried an in-depth article on the life and career of Reggie Nalder, even though he is one of the most memorable

faces in the horror genre. He appeared as the assassin in Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), *Mark of the Devil* (1981) *Zoltan Hound of Dracula* (1978), and of course as Barlow in *Salem's Lot* (1979) and in *Star Trek's* "Journey to Babel" and *Thriller's* "Terror in Teakwood". Does *Starburst* plan to do an interview with Nalder in the near future?"

No. Oh, you forgot to mention that Nalder was the assassin in Dario Argento's *Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1968).

READER'S REQUEST

This is the sort of thing I like. Short and to the point. "Can you print a photo for me of Melinda Fee?" writes B. Stevens of Birmingham. "She was in *The Invisible Man* with David McCallum."

No sooner mentioned than done.

HAMMER GUM CARDS

Here's a strange one from Tony Cotterall of Coalpit Heath, Bristol. He fondly remembers the bubble gum cards featuring stills from Hammer movies that he collected years ago and wants to know whether it's possible to replace his set, which was thrown away in one of his mother's more thoughtless moments.

I have to say, that though I was a keen gum card collector as a kid (in the early Sixties), and had full sets of cards featuring *The Monkees*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, as well as the horrific *Civil War* and *Mars Attacks* sets which were frowned upon by the tabloid press at the time, I can't remember a set of gum cards on Hammer. Does anyone out there have any? I'd love to see some. If any readers can help with this one, let's hear from you...

AUSTRALIAN HORROR

Nigel Sturt (no 'a') of Wolverhampton recently saw a movie called *Next of Kin* on video and like it so much (it was pretty good, wasn't it?), that he'd like cast, credits and a still, and wants to know why we didn't cover it in *Starburst*.

Next of Kin (1982). Dir: Tony Williams. Scr: Tony Williams/Michael Heath. Ph: Gary Hansen. Mus: Klaus Schulze. SPFX: Chris Murray. Makeup: E Fardon. Cast: Jackie Kerin, John Jarrett, Bernadette Gibson, and Alex Scott. The still, an unusual bird's eye view of the discovery of a body in the bath in the old folks home where the best action takes place, is included somewhere in this column. And didn't Barry Forshaw review it in his *Video* column?

WRITER WRONGED

Nicholas Hill wrote to me from Middlesbrough, Cleveland — apologetically — to ask if I could shed any light on the complete works of SF writer Robert Silverberg and wants to know whether any of his material has ever made it to the screen. Love to help you out, Nick, but as Silverberg has about 30 novels, 40 short story collections plus about 200 short stories for magazines to his credit, I just don't have the space. But here's a condensed run-down on the more important Silverberg facts and figures:

Born in 1936, Silverberg has had a critically successful career spanning two decades. His first short story, *Gorgon Planet* was published in 1954. His first novel, *Revolt on Alpha C*, saw print the following year. After years in the field, commer-



Above: Melinda Fee with Craig Stevens and David McCallum in *The Invisible Man*. Top right: *The Terminator*. Below: *Next of Kin* and *Lynda Carter* as Wonder Woman.



cial success eluded him and he retired in the mid-Seventies. However, he made a comeback in 1978 with a new work, *Lord Valentine's Castle*. He still hasn't broken through to the big time, and no one has ever thought to adapt his work for film or TV. His best known novels include: *Recalled to Life* (1967), *To Open the Sky* (1967), *Nightwings* (1969), *Up the Line* (1969), *A Time of Changes* (1971), *Tower of Glass* (1970), *Second Trip* (1972) and *Dying Inside* (1972). His short story collections include: *Next Stop the Stars* (1962), *Needle in a Timestack* (1966), *Dimension 13* (1969), *Born with the Dead* (1974) and *The Best of Robert Silverberg* (1976).

EARTH FUTURE

Paul Finney of Wrotham in Kent enjoyed *The Terminator* quite a bit and liked *Starburst's* coverage of the film. His favourite bits were the scenes set in Earth's future showing the rebels battling valiantly against the machines, and he wants to know if we could show a scene from one of those segments in the film. (Paul also pointed out that I should grant this request as our coverage of *The Terminator* was brief). Okay. Fair enough. You've got it. Next!

WHERE'S LINDA?

P. Henriques is very interested in *Wonder Woman*, that is, Linda Carter. He wants to know whatever

happened to Linda after *Wonder Woman*—he already knows about the Linda Carter TV special in which she sang and danced. Last I heard, P, she had become a born-again something or other. I've not seen her around for some time. So I'll have to throw this one open to the readers. In the meantime, here's a picture to keep you going.

POSTERS AND PORTFOLIOS

A couple of "where can I get"

from our readers. M. Gillanders of Huyton, Liverpool is looking for fantasy art portfolios from the likes of Frank Frazetta. A request with a stamped addressed envelope to Forbidden Planet, 23 Denmark Street, London WC2 should bring results.

And Edward O'Donnell is looking for a poster from the recent Eddie Murphy movie, *Beverly Hills Cop*. You could try sending your request and an SAE to Teddy Green, 4 Ravenslea Road, London SW12. Teddy has a good selection of film posters, old

and new, for sale.

Now write... and don't forget to tell them I sent you.

ALAN JONES— MOVIE STAR

This month's tail-ender is more of an accusation. Grant Gievey, a regular name in this column, remembers a scene in the horror movie *Terror* (1978) in which a girl becomes hysterical at a party and has to be restrained. He's convinced the man doing the restraining was *Starburst's* own Alan Jones.

Guilty! You've got Alan red-handed. Yes, that's tall, blond and lovely Alan Jones. You'll also find Alan wandering about in *The Great Rock and Roll Swindle*, screened recently on Channel 4. But I'll say no more. If you want to find *Starburst* contributors in movies, you spot 'em for yourself. But if you have any sensible questions, send them to me.

Send all your fantasy questions to:

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